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**THE STANWOOD FAMILY:**

OR

**THE HISTORY** +v

OF THE

**AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY.**

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Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.

Eccl. xii. 1.

Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.

Eccl. ix. 10.

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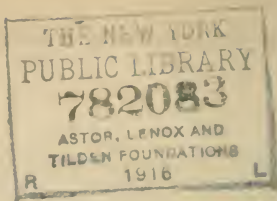
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**Boston:**

PRINTED BY T. R. MARVIN, FOR THE  
**MASSACHUSETTS SABBATH SCHOOL UNION,**  
And sold at their Depository.

.....  
**1830.**



DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS.....TO WIT :

*District Clerk's Office.*

BE IT REMEMBERED, that on the twenty second day of March, A. D. 1830, in the fifty fourth year of the Independence of the United States of America, CHRISTOPHER C. DEAN, of the said District, has deposited in this Office the Title of a Book, the right whereof he claims as Proprietor, in the words following, *to wit* :—

“The Stanwood Family; or The History of the American Tract Society. Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth. Eccl. xii. 1. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might. Eccl. ix. 10. Revised by the Publishing Committee.”

In conformity to the Act of the Congress of the United States, entitled “An Act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned :” and also to an Act entitled “An Act supplementary to an Act entitled An Act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned ; and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving and etching historical and other prints.”

JNO. W. DAVIS, { *Clerk of the District  
of Massachusetts.*

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## PREFACE.

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*My dear young friends,*

I send you this little sketch of the "Stanwood Family," that their zeal and interest in the benevolent operations of the day, may awaken similar determinations and efforts in you. I presume you will find your parents as willing to advise, and aid you in your plans, and I doubt not you may accomplish as much as they. You know not how great an influence you may exert; it is an error to suppose you must fold your hands in inactivity, and watch, afar off, the benevolent motions of your fathers. Form a little band by yourselves, and labor according to your light and means. I cannot tell how much you can do, for you have never tried your united power yet—but I doubt not you will astonish us all; and having commenced the warfare in your childhood, you will come forth upon the stage with a maturity of judgment, and a skill to wield your weapons, equal to that of your fathers now.

With an ardent desire to see you all early enlisted in the cause of Christian benevolence, I subscribe myself,

Your affectionate friend,

THE AUTHOR.

*March 20, 1830.*

## PERSONS INTRODUCED.



Mr. and Mrs. STANWOOD.

EMILY,	}	<i>Children.</i>
WILLIAM,		
SUSAN,		
CHARLES,		
HENRY,		
ANN,		

HELEN SUMNER, *Niece.*

EDWARD SUMNER, *Nephew.*

Col. MERTON, *Brother of Mrs. Stanwood.*

# THE STANWOOD FAMILY ;

OR

## THE HISTORY

OF THE

## AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY.

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### CHAPTER I.

‘ Mother,’ said Susan Stanwood, ‘ what is the principal object of the American Tract Society ?’

Her mother answered, ‘ Its primary object is to furnish a Depository of small Religious Tracts, sufficient for the supply of Auxiliary Societies, and those who may wish to purchase for their own use, or for charitable distribution. It embraces the care and responsibility of collecting, composing and printing Tracts.’

‘ What is a Depository ?’ said Charles, who was sitting on a cricket, by the side of his mother.

Mrs. Stanwood pointed to the book in his lap. Charles understood her, and opening his dictionary, read its meaning—but seemed still unsatisfied, and looked to his mother for farther explanation.

She answered his inquiring look by saying, ‘The Tract Depository is like any common bookstore, except, that it is devoted exclusively to Tracts and small religious publications.’

*Susan.* ‘What a vast sum of money it must require, to print Tracts enough to fill a large bookstore!’

*Charles.* ‘Yes, mother; and I am sure I cannot see where it all comes from.’

*Mother.* ‘There are several sources, my son, from which money is obtained to defray the expenses of the Society. In the first place, every person, who becomes a member, pays a certain sum yearly, and these subscriptions afford considerable assistance. It receives also many donations, and a considerable amount from persons, who become life-members, by the payment of \$20 at one time—from occasional contributions, from the sale of its Tracts, and from other sources.’

‘I thought, mother,’ said Susan, ‘that the



Tract Society was altogether a charitable concern; that they printed Tracts, and *gave* them away.'

'It is true, they distribute gratuitously many thousand pages annually,' said Mrs. Stanwood. 'I think the last year the number was 2,016,628 pages, besides \$650 in money, appropriated to aid Foreign Missions in their Tract operations. But the American Tract Society has 630 Auxiliaries, which it supplies with Tracts on the lowest terms.'

*Susan.* 'Then every Tract Society does not print its own Tracts.'

*Mother.* 'No; the inconvenience and expense to which single charitable societies would be subjected, by such an undertaking, would be very great. To obviate this difficulty, it was deemed expedient that the American Tract Society should direct its attention principally to the simple design of publishing Tracts, in quantities sufficient to enable them to supply other Tract Societies on much cheaper terms, than they could furnish themselves. As the object of this Society is expressly *to do good*, and not to make money, they sell their Tracts for very nearly what they cost.'

Helen Sumner raised her eyes from her drawing, as this last observation was closed, and said, 'Why, aunt, how entirely different are your last remarks and my own previous ideas. I have always supposed from what I have heard, that Bible, Missionary, and Tract Societies were real money-making concerns; and that many, who engaged the most zealously in their promotion, were prompted as much by the expectation of gain, as by a desire to do good.'

*Mrs. Stanwood.* 'I can easily convince you, Helen, that expectations of a *lucrative* nature are not the motives that lead to such engagedness in Societies of this kind; the low price of their publications is a proof—Susan, hand me some Tracts from the library.'

Susan rose to reach them.

'Come, Rover,' said little Henry, who had been for some time busying himself by fixing a bridle on his favorite's neck, 'come, let's go and hear.' So he drew up to his mother, to hear about the Tract Society.

Little Ann, who was between two and three years old, followed her brother very slowly, with Puss, almost as big as herself, in her arms.

All gathered around Mrs. Stanwood as she opened a Tract, and began to count its pages.

‘ This Tract of ten pages,’ said their mother, ‘ they sell for a cent.’

‘ Only a cent !’ exclaimed all the children in a breath.

‘ And this beautiful Tract,’ said Mrs. Stanwood, taking up the “ Young Cottager,” costs but a little more than two cents.’

‘ How very cheap,’ said Helen.

*Charles.* ‘ Now only think, Susan, the silly book, that I bought for Ann the other day, cost three times as much as this pretty story about “ Little Jane.” ’

*Henry.* ‘ That’s a *true* story too, and she was pious when she died.’

Ann dropped Puss, and asked, in her broken way, if little Jane went to heaven.

‘ Yes, my dear,’ said Mrs. Stanwood, as she brushed away the curls to kiss the child, ‘ for little Jane loved God—and although she was a poor child on earth, she will find many a gem in her “ crown of glory ” above.’

‘ *Why*, mother ?’ said Henry earnestly.

*Mother.* ‘ Because, my son, she will meet many redeemed souls in heaven, who probably would never have been there, but for the Tract,

which contains the simple story of her life and death.'

*Henry.* 'Do Tracts *convert* people, mother?'

*Mother.* 'God changes the heart, my child, and a *change of heart* is *conversion*; but he always employs means to that end—and it has often pleased him to cause the reading of Tracts to incline a sinner to think of his dangerous state, while without love to God, to repent of his sins, and turn from his evil ways.'

*Charles.* 'A Tract is such a little thing, mother, one would not think it could do any good.'

'God often chooses the "weak things of the world" to accomplish the greatest effects,' replied Mrs. Stanwood.

'I wonder, mother,' said Emily, the eldest daughter, 'who first proposed the plan of circulating Tracts.'

*Mother.* 'The first *society*, known to have engaged extensively in the printing and circulation of Religious Tracts, is the "Society in England for Promoting Christian Knowledge," incorporated by the British parliament in 1647—'

*Charles.* '1647; please to wait a minute, mother, and let me see how long ago that was.'

‘One hundred and eighty two years,’ said Henry, as he jumped from his cricket and straightened up, till he seemed an inch taller than usual.

‘Charles smiled at his brother’s arithmetical pride, and gave him a significant look, which seemed to say, ‘*I’ll* think first, next time.’

Susan said, ‘what a long time ago—I thought a Tract Society was a new thing.’

*Mother.* ‘Not in other countries, my dear, although in America, it is comparatively so. The first Society of any magnitude, formed for this object in the United States, was the “Massachusetts Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge,” instituted at Boston, in 1803. The New England (now American) Tract Society was formed in Boston, May 23, 1814.’

‘That’s 15 years ago last May,’ said Charles, winking at Henry.

*Susan.* ‘I wish, mother, I knew more about Tract Societies.’

‘Do tell us *all* about Tracts,’ said Charles; ‘*do*,’ cried Henry; ‘*do*,’ said little Ann, as she crept into her mother’s lap, hardly knowing why or what she wanted to hear. Helen seconded the children’s motion, while William,

who had been for some time listening, closed his Virgil, and seated himself by the fire.

Mrs. Stanwood promised to comply with their unanimous request, and after many protestations of profound attention from her younger auditors, she began by saying, ‘ The origin of the American Tract Society is traced to a little meeting of a few benevolent individuals, whose desire and delight it was to be like their Master, ever “doing good.” They had assembled to enjoy the advantages of Christian intercourse, and to devise plans for the advancement of the Redeemer’s kingdom. They felt, that the increase of infidelity, the profanation of the Sabbath, and the growing impiety of those around, urgently demanded some effort, that might have a salutary influence on the community.

‘ A trifling incident suggested to one of them the idea, that “ a few choice Tracts, printed in large editions, might be afforded to benevolent individuals in the neighborhood, at a much less expense than the little books they were frequently purchasing for gratuitous distribution,” and perhaps a greater amount of good, with small means, might be accomplished in this way, than in any other. He named it to the

others; it excited much interest; became a topic of serious conversation and reflection, and led to the proposition of forming a small Tract Society, to put the design in execution. In a few days, the present Constitution was formed, a subscription opened, and measures were taken to commence operation immediately.

“A large number of individuals advanced a sum sufficient to print each a Tract of his own choice; and such was the blessing of God on their efforts, that though bound together by scarcely any thing but Christian affection, in less than three months previous to the formation of the Society in May, 1814, fifty Tracts were printed, comprising two volumes of the Society's publications, and amounting in all to 300,000 copies.”

‘Well done,’ said William, clapping his hands, ‘that man had a very bright thought.’

‘Yes,’ added Emily, smiling; ‘I suppose he little imagined, that in less than 15 years, that thought would prove the root of a tree, with 630 branches.’

‘And think too,’ said Mrs. Stanwood, ‘of the millions of Tracts, which have fallen like so many leaves from these branches, for the heal-

ing of the nations, and of the countless multitudes in glory, who will hereafter point to these little messengers as their guides to blessedness ; and, my children, if ever *I* reach heaven, I shall be one of that happy number.'

'Why, mother,' said Henry earnestly, 'was it a Tract, that made *you* pious ?'

*Susan.* 'What Tract was it ?'

'It was "Sin, no Trifle,"' replied her mother ; 'it led me to feel I was a great sinner in the sight of God, and to pray to him for forgiveness ; to be sorry, to mourn and weep over my sins—and I trust to choose Christ as my portion, and his word as my guide.'

'Were *you* ever *wicked*, mother ?' asked Henry, much surprised.

*Mother.* 'Yes, my son, are we not *all* sinners ?'

*Henry.* 'Yes, mother ; but I did not think *you* were wicked.'

'It is so,' said Mrs. Stanwood ; 'your mother sinned against God by forgetting him, by being unthankful and ungrateful, as you are now often—and of these sins, we must both repent, Henry, before we can be permitted to dwell with God in heaven.'



Henry hung his head, and was silent. Mrs. Stanwood paused a moment, and then asked if any of them could think of any advantages, which the plan of circulating Tracts might have over other means of doing good.

‘I think *I* can,’ said Henry.

‘It’s a *cheap* way,’ answered Charles quickly.

‘Yes, mother,’ added Susan, ‘I’m sure, if the “Young Cottager” has been the means of converting many souls, I do not see how two cents could be better spent, than in buying a Tract.’

*Emily.* ‘They are so *small* too, a person would be more likely to read them than a large book.’

*Helen.* ‘I can think of *one* advantage, aunt. A Tract would not be so likely to give offence, as personal conversation. *I* should much rather read one, than have a person *talk* to me on religious subjects.’

‘Why so, Helen?’ asked Mrs. Stanwood.

‘I don’t know, aunt,’ she replied hesitatingly; ‘but it would be more agreeable to my feelings to receive instruction from a silent, unobtrusive Tract.’

*Mrs. Stanwood.* ‘But Tracts are often far

more pointed and searching, than personal religious conversation.'

*Helen.* 'I know it, aunt; but it has *no eyes*; you may look and feel unobserved; your looks and motions are not watched, and you are not obliged to answer its queries. Many persons have conversed with me; but some are so harsh, some so gloomy, and others so assuming and self-important, that I seldom derive any benefit. But Tracts come divested of all these unpleasant things.'

'Mother,' said William, 'I am really afraid we shall lose track of those good men, before we get them nicely formed into a society; what did they do next?'

*Susan.* 'Why, they are *already* formed into a society; don't you remember, they printed 300,000 pages of Tracts? Did you not say so, mother?'

*Mother.* 'The Society was not regularly organized at the time those Tracts were printed.'

*Charles.* 'What were they waiting for, mother?'

*Mother.* 'Until all necessary arrangements could be made, and their plans matured; and until the anniversary of other religious and

charitable societies in Election week. Then a meeting was held, in which the formal organization of the Society took place, its officers were chosen, the Constitution read and adopted, and several interesting addresses were made.'

*Charles.* 'What were the addresses about?'

*Mother.* 'In one, I recollect it was stated, that the extensive distribution of Tracts must exert an important influence on the community, either good or bad, according to their nature. It was said that Voltaire—'

'Voltaire!' echoed Susan, 'who was he?'

'An infidel,' replied her mother; 'one, who disbelieved the Bible.'

The children looked at one another, quite astonished.

Mrs. Stanwood proceeded: 'Voltaire was more successful in propagating irreligion and vice, by means of infidel Tracts, than in any other way—and it was inferred, if *pernicious* Tracts might be successfully promulgated, why not those of a holy tendency.

'The successful efforts of similar societies in other countries were next alluded to, as affording great encouragement to the patrons of this. The alarming increase of infidelity and vice,

and the profanation of the Sabbath, were referred to as growing evils, and calling for mighty efforts to check the overwhelming tide. Christians were reminded of their responsibility in the use and abuse of their personal influence. Something must be done to arrest the perishing multitudes in their sinful career, and to that end, they must be brought to consideration; and how could this be done, till they were first brought to *read*.

‘How few of the poor, comparatively, would furnish themselves with books—the hand of charity must be extended, or they would never be supplied; and Tracts, of an engaging and interesting form, would excite greater interest than books of a larger kind. Several interesting facts were next related, illustrative of the beneficial effects of Tracts.’

‘Oh! mother, do tell them to us?’ said the younger children.

‘Do, do,’ added Charles; ‘I love to hear *facts* above all things.’

*Mrs. Stanwood.* ‘I do not recollect but one or two of them; however, I will relate those, if you, little ones, will keep perfectly still.’

‘ We will, we will,’ said they all.

Mrs. Stanwood continued ; ‘ the first I remember was of a young man, whose situation had peculiarly exposed him to temptation. He had become very profane and vicious, and manifested unusual enmity to religious truth, while the exhortations and counsels of his serious friends excited the most bitter indignation. A friend, visiting in the family with which he was connected, handed him a Tract, and solicited as a favor, that he would read it. He took it with him to his apartment, and before he retired to rest, examined the first page ; he was struck with its contents ; it was something new. The next day, he finished reading it, and was deeply affected. It led him to repentance and faith in the Saviour ; and he is now as eminently zealous in holiness, as he was formerly in immorality.

‘ The other person had been a seaman in the navy. He was a Sabbath-breaker, a drunkard, and a swearer. A religious Tract drew his attention, and he read it attentively—it led him to a constant attendance on public worship, afterward to a total reformation in life, and he

has for years lived a consistent and exemplary Christian.\*

Helen had dropped her pencil, and listened with attention and evident interest to these anecdotes. As soon as her aunt ceased speaking, she inquired if 'such effects were not quite uncommon.'

'Not at all, Helen,' replied Mrs. Stanwood; 'I have in my possession authentic statements of the conversion of nearly 2000 souls—and thousands more, I doubt not, are known to Him, who knoweth all things. How many,' she continued, as the tear of gratitude trembled in her eye, 'how many precious souls will be drawn to heaven by the light of a Tract.'

'Charles,' said Henry, whispering to his brother, 'I mean to save all my cents to buy Tracts with, because they do so much good.'

William begged his mother to tell the success of the Society, how much money they collected, how many Tracts they printed, and all their doings.

So Mrs. Stanwood resumed her narrative and said, 'The first year, including the three

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\* "Proceedings of the first ten years, American Tract Society." Page 17.

months previous to the formation of the Society, 438,000 Tracts were published, four Depositories established in large towns, and \$1,252 50 were received in money. In the second year, four Depositories, in addition, were formed, 378,000 Tracts were issued, and \$2,958 39 were received into the treasury.'

*Charles.* 'Well, I am glad, they received so much more *money* the second year; but it seems they did not do any better in other things.'

*Mother.* 'Oh! yes, they had made great progress. Auxiliary Tract Societies were fast multiplying; new encouragements to greater efforts and unwearied perseverance had been daily increasing; the field of usefulness seemed fast widening; the importance of Tracts augmenting; and the Society found itself prepared to enter upon its third year with new zeal and renewed activity. During this year—'

'What year was it, mother?' asked Susan.

*Mother.* '1816; and this year, 411,000 Tracts were published, twenty five new Depositories formed—'

'Twenty five!!' said William quickly; 'that's brave!'

*Mother.* 'And \$1,117 78 were received.'

'Why, mother,' said Charles, looking quite disappointed, 'that is not *half* as much as they had last year.'

*Mother.* 'But still they were much encouraged. Several instances of conversion through the instrumentality of the Tracts they had circulated, had inspired them with new vigor in their labor of love; and they felt more fully assured this thing was of the Lord; that he would bless their efforts and increase the means for still wider circulation. They had obtained, during the year, an act of incorporation from the legislature of this Commonwealth, and they fondly hoped the Society would become a permanent institution, and extend a holy influence from generation to generation, till the end of time. I forgot to mention,' continued Mrs. Stanwood, 'that the General Depository was removed to Andover, during the present year. The efforts of the Society were also directed farther to the South and West, than in years before; and a very interesting communication of some of their results was received from a clergyman, who had been supplied with Tracts through the liberality of this Society. I have a



letter in my possession, containing several extracts from that communication. Susan, you may open my writing-desk, and reach me the file of letters under 1816.'

Susan obeyed. Mrs. Stanwood soon found the desired letter, and hastily casting her eyes over its contents, found the information alluded to.

'Oh! do let me see,' said little Henry, as he climbed on the rounds of his mother's chair, and began to peep over her shoulder.

*Mother.* 'I cannot read, till you are seated, my son. Remember it is very impolite for little boys to look over a person's shoulder while reading.'

'Or writing either,' added Charles, pleased to show off his sense of propriety.

Mrs. Stanwood commenced reading :

'The Tracts and other books placed in my hands by this Society, for circulation, met with a reception truly gratifying. The Tracts, in particular, have produced a surprising effect, wherever they have been scattered. It has been truly pleasing to witness such demonstrations of gratitude, while distributing them, as I have frequently seen manifested on their recep-

tion. I could relate to you many interesting instances of their utility, but I will confine myself to two or three, in which you may observe how highly they are valued, and the vast influence they are exerting here.

‘I was riding into Natchez one day, and hearing the sound of a voice in the woods, curiosity induced me to follow it and ascertain its cause. I soon discovered a negro, kneeling at prayer.

‘When he approached me, I inquired what he had been doing there; he replied with diffidence, ‘I was saying my prayers.’

‘Do negroes pray?’ I inquired.

‘Yes, master, some few do; but it is to be lamented so small a number pray.’

‘How long have you been in the habit of praying?’ I asked.

‘Not more than three or four years,’ he replied.

I questioned him still farther. ‘What was the cause of your having a desire to pray?’

He answered, ‘It was the will of God. The scriptures tell us we always should pray, and make our requests known to God.’

‘Can you read?’

‘ Yes, sir.’

‘ I drew several ‘Tracts from my pocket, and required him to show, that he could read. He took one, and read distinctly. It was ‘The Negro Servant.’ I gave him that, with the ‘Shepherd of Salisbury Plain.’ He received them with uplifted hands and eyes, giving thanks to God for the kind gift. On inquiry, I have since ascertained, it is his custom every Sabbath day to read them to his impenitent companions, and exhort them to turn from sin and serve a holy God.

‘ Another negro, who had received a couple of Tracts, carries them in his bosom, calling them the gift of heaven. When one of his fellow servants asked him, if he would sell him the gift of heaven, he replied, ‘The gift of God is not to be purchased with money. I would not take fifty dollars for them, if there were no more.’

‘ A little boy, also, of genteel and moral parents, received two or three ‘Tracts, read them with so much interest, and discovered so much gravity of deportment afterwards, that his mother desired to see the little books herself; and when she had commenced, she could

not rest till she had read them through. The little boy tells me, 'The reading of them makes his mother cry.' He often inquires, 'When will you return with more good books. Other books,' he says, 'are very useful for information, but do no good in dying.' I have frequent opportunities of observing him, and he is very sedate in his behaviour.

'Wishing you success in your useful labors, I subscribe myself,

'Your obliged friend.'\*

Just as Mrs. Stanwood closed this letter, the door-bell rang. Rover barked, and the children ran to the door, exclaiming, father's come—he has—it is he, and the moment he entered, Mr. Stanwood found himself surrounded, and almost overwhelmed by a group of his merry, jumping children. The Tract Society and all their evening's pleasure were for a time forgotten, in the joyful sight of their father again, who had been absent three weeks.

After the first burst of joy had subsided, and the little hearts of the Stanwoods had dilated enough to contain two ideas at a time, their ex-

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\* See "Pro. First Ten Yrs. Am. Tr. Soc." Page 44.

pressions of delight were intermingled with a broken story of their evening's entertainment, and they ran on, one voice rising above another, and all the little tongues rattling together, except Ann's, (and she had climbed to her usual seat on father's knee, and was amusing herself alternately with pulling his shiny buttons, and rubbing her soft little cheek on his velvet collar,) till Mr. Stanwood checked the prattlers by saying, he had expected as *warm*, but not as *noisy* a welcome; and that he should consider those the most delighted to see him, who expressed their joy in the most gentle manner; for his head ached, and he was much fatigued by his long, cold ride. The clamor ceased, for it was the calm but decided voice and manner, that had ever hushed the little group to peace, and they all sank quietly into their seats, with eyes fixed on him as overflowing with love and delight, as the tongues had just been, which now ceased to prattle.

## CHAPTER II.

THE younger children could scarcely contain themselves till the next evening, the time appointed by their mother for a renewal of her narrative. When prayers were over, the tea-things removed, and the time had actually arrived, you would have smiled to see such a running to and fro for crickets and chairs, and such a strife, though all in good nature, to know who should sit next to mother. You would have laughed heartily too, had you seen how many obstacles poor Henry surmounted, and how little they were valued, when he found himself in the privileged place. After Mrs. Stanwood and the young ladies were quietly seated, and William had drawn his chair into the circle, she thus commenced.

‘ We had followed the Society through the first years of its existence ; do you remember at what time we left it ? ’

‘ 1818,’ was echoed by all.

*Mother.* ‘ Yes ; and during this year, the

receipts of the Society were \$2,266 85, and the number of new Depositories established were seven. The Tracts printed this year, amounted to 386,000; and in the year following, its receipts were \$1,718 86, five Depositories were formed, and 258,000 Tracts issued.'

*Emily.* 'And were they able, with all their necessary expenses, to carry on their operations free from debt?'

*Mother.* 'No, they were not. The Society found itself at the close of its fifth year, more than \$1000 in debt.'

The children made loud exclamations of surprise.

Emily turned to Helen, and said archly, 'No one in this Society it seems has had an opportunity *yet* to make his fortune by printing and selling Tracts.'

Helen looked up, and smiled—then said with more of a sneer than she was aware, 'Who knows how much money may have been received, more than has been acknowledged. To be honest, I have always hesitated about assisting such societies, for this very reason—that no one could know with any certainty, what became of

the money thus deposited. With the pretext of sending it away to the heathen, or purchasing Tracts, who knows but these same men appropriate it to their own use, and grow rich upon the charity of others.'

'Upon the treasury of the Lord!' added her aunt.

'Now, Helen, I must say your conjectures are too wild, and your suspicions too dark for your artless disposition seriously to cherish. I am not surprised, however, to hear them, for your father once expressed the same to me; but I could array before you hosts of arguments to prove these surmises are not only improbable, but wholly unfounded. In the first place, you forget the managers of this Society are some of the most moral, respectable, trust-worthy men in the country, with souls too noble to stoop to the commission of deeds, mean and base as these; and, besides, supposing even one, guilty of such baseness, think you it would remain undisclosed by the rest. No. The implication of their own character would forbid its concealment. But setting aside these, as no positive proof, there is one fact, which removes all doubt and mistrust



from the subject, of which, had you been habituated to read the religious periodicals, you would have been informed.'

*Helen.* 'What is that, aunt?'

*Mrs. Stanwood.* 'That every donation and subscription, with the name of the donor, (unless the suppression of the name is desired,) are acknowledged in the periodicals—so that the fraud might be easily detected, if the acknowledgment were withheld.'

*Helen.* 'I never heard of that before.'

*Henry.* 'If I should give my money to the Society, would *my* name be printed?'

*Mother.* 'Certainly.'

*Helen.* 'But, who knows about the donations of those, whose names are *suppressed*. They might pocket those, without discovery.'

*Mrs. Stanwood.* 'There is very little danger of that; for should the initials of any name be given, or any signature whatever, the donor could ascertain its acknowledgement. There are some cases, however, where no clue is given, and consequently the amount of the donation only is expressed, and the donor mentioned as unknown; but his own consciousness would unravel this expression of it.'

*Helen.* ‘Well, I must confess this is all quite new to me ; but still—(do not think me incorrigible, aunt)—perhaps all receipts are publicly acknowledged—so every thing may look smooth and fair, and appear well—and then there’s the money still—’

*Mrs. Stanwood.* ‘But look at this—(handing her one of the annual Reports ;) examine this table of receipts and expenditures—all properly vouched.’

(Helen takes the pamphlet, and examines attentively.)

*Emily.* ‘I am more concerned about the debt incurred, than about their honesty.’

*Susan.* ‘I should think it would have discouraged them entirely.’

*Mother.* ‘I suppose the managers of this Society were not as unsteady and wavering, and as easily alarmed at small obstacles as my daughter. Now instead of being discouraged, they felt more strongly pressed to greater exertions. They had increasing evidence from year to year, that they had embarked in a good cause, and that it was approved by the Lord ; and in order to extend their operations, and relieve themselves from embarrassment, they resolved to

employ an agent to travel through the country to—'

*Charles.* 'What is an agent, mother?'

*Mother.* 'An agent is a person employed to transact business for another, or for a company of persons. The special efforts of Mr. Dwight, the gentleman appointed to this agency, were directed to these objects—establishing new depositories, forming Tract Societies, soliciting donations to increase the funds of the Society, and extending the circulation of Tracts. He also corresponded extensively, to make known the object and wants of the Society, and to excite an interest in its operations.'

*Henry.* 'I do not understand the meaning of 'funds of the Society.'

*Mother.* 'It is the stock, or capital, invested in Tracts. *A Permanent Fund* is where only the interest of the capital is used.'

*Emily.* 'Did the agency prove as great a benefit as they anticipated?'

*Mother.* 'Yes, even greater. Mr. Dwight was unwearied in his exertions, and successful in all his efforts. He was instrumental of awakening a very lively interest in the subject

of distributing Tracts, wherever he visited ; he procured more than 100 life members, and \$4,137 17 were received into the Treasury.'

'That is more than was received the last two years,' exclaimed William, with delight.

*Emily.* 'If so much good is effected by the faithfulness and activity of an agent, I should think every large Society would deem it advisable to support one.'

*Mother.* 'It is important they should ; without the interest and effort of a faithful agency, societies must in a short time droop and expire. It is easy to rouse excitement, but without an occasional impulse, it will soon vanish. Now it is necessary the public mind should be enlightened on the mode and success of the Society's efforts, and public interest should be the grand spring of its extensive usefulness. A knowledge of its successful efforts, and a continuance of unwearied and renewed activity in its object, can be perpetuated only by the exclusive time, talents, and labors of a faithful, efficient person, enlisted in its cause.'

*Helen.* 'But, aunt, if I should make a donation to a Tract Society, I should feel desirous it

should be directly used in printing Tracts, and not in the support of agents or any body else.'

*Mrs. Stanwood.* 'If you followed an agent, Helen, through all his tours and labors—heard him preach from Sabbath to Sabbath to hundreds of anxious, earnest listeners, with a soul glowing with the importance of his subject, and watched his vast influence on community—if you heard the numerous prayers for blessings on this object, from devoted Christian hearts, warmed by his appeals—if you saw the many precious mites, distilling like dew into the Treasury of the Lord, and remembered they would never have been contributed but for his earnest pleadings—would you not think you were aiding the cause efficiently by administering to the support of such a valuable auxiliary to its prosperity? Think too of the prejudices allayed, the interesting facts collected during his travels, the numerous hearts and hands enlisted in the good work, which but for him would ever have remained dormant and folded to all exertion in its behalf. As a proof, I recollect one instance of the happy result of the interest Mr. Dwight excited on the subject of Tracts, among a small number of sailors.'

*Charles.* 'Please to tell it, mother.'

*Mother.* 'It was "on the arrival of the ship Exeter, on board of which, during her voyage, there had been great seriousness among the sailors, that Capt. L. invited the agent of the Society to meet his men, converse and pray with them. Before his departure it was made known, that he was endeavoring to increase the funds of the Society. One of the honest sailors stepped forward and said 'There is one dollar; another gave three; another, three; one five, and one whose serious impressions had first been made by reading a Tract, gave ten, and the Captain twenty. Thus making a donation of \$42 from this little church of six members.'"\*

*Emily.* 'That is more, I dare say, than some of our flourishing churches in New England have done.'

*Susan.* 'How long, mother, did Mr. Dwight continue in the agency?'

*Mother.* 'One year; and during that time he visited various places in New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Ver-

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\* Pro. First Ten Years Am. Tr. Soc. Page 71.

mont, Canada, and New York. 383,000 Tracts were printed, and nineteen Depositories established. Of the 100 life members obtained this year, 78 were ministers of the gospel.'

*William.* 'I should think every church would make its Pastor a life member. How much money the Society would receive, if it were to be done.'

*Emily.* 'They might constitute the minister's *wife* a life member too; it would be a very affectionate token of respect, and essentially aid a good cause.'

*William.* 'Mother, how many settled ministers do you suppose there are in Massachusetts?'

*Mother.* 'About 670, I believe, of all denominations.'

*William.* 'Now, if they would all become life members, it would bring into the treasury 13,400; then if their wives should become so likewise, the sum would be \$23,800.'

'What a sum!' exclaimed Emily, 'and with how little effort it might be raised.'

*Mother.* 'And if but five hundred of those ministers and their wives should become life members of the American Tract Society, an acquisition of \$20,000 would be made; this

might be laid aside as a permanent fund, and would afford an annual income of more than double the receipts of the Society, in donations from May, 1814 to May, 1820.'

*William.* 'But how can that be, mother. I thought as you were naming each year's receipts, donations alone were included.'

*Mother.* 'Oh no, my son ; they comprised the sales of their Tracts each year, as well as the donations. Let us now follow out the plan we have devised. Let us see how many pages of Tracts might annually be printed with the interest of \$20,000.'

*Susan.* 'The interest of that sum would be \$1200 would it not ?'

*Mother.* 'Yes ; and that amount would print twelve hundred thousand pages annually, or three hundred thousand Tracts, of four pages each. Now the Swearer's Prayer has but four pages, and supposing each of these three hundred thousand tracts should gain admission to a family, and be read by six persons—they would be preachers to eighteen hundred thousand souls – one seventh as many people as are in the whole United States. If a missionary should preach two hundred times in a year, and every



time to 200 persons, he could not address so many immortal souls in less than forty-five years.'

The children uttered loud exclamations of surprise. 'Only think, too,' said William, 'this might be done every year.'

*Emily.* 'Yes; and in ten years, they would have been preachers of righteousness to eighteen millions of souls, and perhaps not so worn out either, as that their usefulness should be at an end.'

'I am sure,' said little Henry, in quite a disconsolate way, 'I cannot tell how many people eighteen millions would be; I never counted to a million.'

William stepped aside, and seemed busily engaged with his slate and pencil for a few moments. 'Here, Henry,' said he, as he returned to his chair, 'I can tell you.'

'Do you know how large a square foot of land is?'

*Henry.* Yes; it is so big—' (drawing a square on the carpet with his fingers.)

*William.* 'Well, eighteen millions of men would be as many as could stand on thirty-one square miles and one ninetieth part of a mile,

supposing it were level, and allowing one square foot of ground to a man, or one square yard to nine men.

*Susan.* ‘Thirty-one square miles! I cannot believe it. Why, what a long row they would make; it would take a whole day to reach the end of it.’

*Mother.* ‘Who can tell how many of these eighteen millions might be led to serious reflection by this powerful appeal—how many thoughtless, hardened sinners reformed to newness of life. Perhaps there is no Tract, of which so many interesting facts have reached our knowledge, as the “Swearer’s Prayer.” During the sixth year of the Society’s existence, (1820) more encouraging communications were received than in any former year. The importance of the Institution was more deeply and effectually felt by Christians, and even many, possessing very small means, enlisted nobly in its cause. I heard that one female, who received a weekly compensation for her services in a respectable family, generously gave \$20 to print the Swearer’s Prayer.

‘Among other communications, a letter was received from a sailor, stating “two of the ship’s

company were brought to a sense of their awful state of sin and misery, and of their need of sanctification by the Saviour, in consequence of reading a Tract."\* Three dollars accompanied this letter, as a donation from the writer.

'In 1821, the year following, 468,000 Tracts were published, 14 new depositories were established, and the receipts of the treasury were \$5617 48. The Tract, entitled the Christian Almanack, was first issued this year.'

*Henry.* 'The Almanack, like ours? I never knew that was a *Tract*.'

*Mother.* 'Yes; it is one of the Publications of the Tract Society, and is a most valuable thing. It contains many interesting facts, relative to the present state of Christian and heathen countries, and a condensed view of all the Benevolent Societies and their operations, besides the useful matter, contained in other almanacks.'

*Helen.* 'I was looking at that, aunt, this morning. I admired it; I thought I had never seen any thing of the kind in which more interesting and useful information was contained.'

*William.* 'Will you please to tell me one

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\* See "Pro. First Ten Years. Am. Tr. Soc." Page 72.

thing. Did the American Tract Society still supply all the Depositories with Tracts ?

*Mother.* ' Yes ; each Depository was under the care of an agent, appointed by the Committee, who received the Tracts, and when they were sold, returned the money, and were furnished with a new supply.'

*William.* ' How many Tracts it must have been necessary to print, in order to supply them all.'

*Mother.* ' It is true ; and remember, the Society had at this time seventy-one Depositories, which must all be constantly supplied. A much larger capital than it then possessed was necessary, in order promptly to meet their demands. And what was the consequence of want of funds ? Tracts *could not* be printed in quantities sufficient to meet the daily pressing calls ; and some auxiliary Societies, and very important ones too, were actually dissolved, and many more were rendered useless on account of the difficulty of obtaining Tracts. Some I knew to have sent twenty and forty miles from time to time unsuccessfully, till disappointed and despairing, their efforts ceased. I heard a gentleman, speaking on the subject, say at the time,

that these Depositories on an average, ought to have \$100 worth of Tracts, and that with the number they then had, they needed a capital of \$14,000 at least, to keep the system in efficient operation. He added, there were many extensive regions in our country, and those too, the most destitute of moral and religious instruction, where there were no Depositories, and where Tracts were almost entirely unknown. To supply these regions, many, very many Depositories were required, and the capital would need to be proportionably increased. Oh, said he, if Christians would but awake to more extended benevolence !

William became uneasy ; he rose from his chair and stood upright. Then, raising his arms above his head, he clasped his hands, and straightening up an inch or more, as if to accelerate his manhood, he exclaimed, (the soul of benevolence beaming in his eye,) ‘ if ever *I* live to be a *man*, mother, the Tract Society shall know it !!’

*Susan.* ‘ And if I was a man too, they should find *me* out ; but there’s nothing for girls to do—they must even sit still, and look on.’

‘ Not so indeed,’ replied her mother,—‘ Susan

Stanwood, though but twelve years old, has much to do in this fallen world ; she may yet wield an influence, that may be felt throughout her country.'

'How ? mother,' she asked eagerly.

*Mother.* 'Even by your personal exertions in this benevolent cause. I have formed a plan—but more of that hereafter. When we close the history of Tract operations, which will be in the course of three or four evenings, you shall know it.'

'But to return to my subject ; in addition to numerous calls for the establishment of Depositories, the Society had many pressing entreaties for Tracts to distribute gratuitously. Some of these urgent requests were from seamen, some from missionaries, and some from destitute parts of the country ; but for want of funds, they were unable, in most cases, to supply them.'

*Emily.* 'What a pity ! I should suppose missionaries would find them of immense value in their travelling tours.'

*Mother.* 'Yes ; and could they be furnished with a complete assortment, probably they might accomplish as much good by the distribution of Tracts, as by any of their labors. There are

some idolatrous countries, where a state of feeling is awakened, peculiarly favorable to the circulation of Tracts. They are beginning to fear their system of idolatry is vain, although they have not sufficient courage to renounce it. Many more are halting "between two opinions." The spirit of inquiry and examination, which this fear has elicited, is a favorable preparation for a candid reception of truth. An English missionary in India writes, that "millions of Tracts might be scattered in that country with the prospect of an abundant harvest." In some heathen places, where a few have been distributed among the people, so great has been the interest awakened in their perusal, that they have come to the missionaries, stating they had travelled two hundred miles to obtain more.'

*Charles.* 'But, mother, how could ignorant heathen read Tracts in our language?'

*Mother.* 'They could not: but you must remember, more than one twentieth part of the globe speak the English language; and in India are many English and American residents, among whom our Tracts, if circulated, might be as successful, perhaps, as in our own land. It has been one of the first efforts of the mis-

sionaries, after acquiring a knowledge of the language of the country, where they were stationed, and preparing a printing press for operation, to translate and publish some of our most useful and interesting Tracts. These they would consider necessary companions in all their travels, and scatter them, wherever opportunity offered. But the number they have been able to print, with their limited means, compared with the wants of the people, is very small. In 1822, an active Christian, feeling the vast importance of circulating Tracts among the heathen in their own language, contributed \$50 of the avails of the Christian Almanack, sold by himself, to publish Tracts in the Mah-ratta language. Now this sum would print more than 6000 copies of a Tract of eight pages, which might be extensively circulated and read among the millions of that people.'

Mrs. Stanwood had just finished this sentence, when Charles burst into a hearty laugh. All the circle raised their eyes to ascertain the cause of such an unceremonious and abrupt departure from all the rules of propriety and courtesy.

Poor Henry was found to be the cause; he



was fast asleep on his cricket, and had been, for some time multiplying his nods and bows, to Charles' complete satisfaction, till at length one more lowly and ungraceful than the rest, threw him from his balance, and he was just rolling on the carpet, when Charles interrupted the story. Henry was mortified at his misfortune—but most of all, that he was thought to feel so little interest in his mother's narrative, as not to keep his eyes open. Rover, Puss and Ann, on investigation, were found to be no more interested than Henry, for they too were asleep. But the general stir soon awoke all.

Mrs. Stanwood looked round attentively upon her young auditors a moment. Emily saw the glance and laughingly said, 'She hoped her mother was so good a physiognomist as to discover no predisposition in *her* countenance to like unmannerly conduct with the little ones—for she was sure, nature would allow her eyes to be open no wider than they were at present.' William declared he 'was never so wide awake in his life'—and Helen, that she 'was so interested in her aunt's narration, it was very possible she might soon become a convert to the

utility of Tracts, and therefore begged her to go on.'

Mrs. Stanwood said, 'It was nearly eight, the stated time for the younger boys to retire, and she would have time for little more that evening—she would relate a few anecdotes, however, if Henry could possibly keep awake a few moments longer.' Henry assured his mother he could, and at the word, anecdote, seemed to brighten considerably, for he was famous as a story-loving boy.

*Mother.* 'The facts, which came within the knowledge of the Society this year, were of so encouraging a nature as to stamp this system of benevolence with God's approval.

'One clergyman assured the agent of the Society, that during a revival of religion in his parish, the Tracts he distributed seemed to be as effectual in promoting and deepening its interests, as all his other labors; and that he seldom made inquiry in any town, or of any person, but he heard some instances of conversion, through the instrumentality of Tracts.

'Another gentleman stated several facts within his own observation. A leaf of a Tract,

picked up by a careless sinner, was instrumental of turning him from sin to righteousness. A person, who had received Bibles and Tracts for distribution, transmitted the pleasing intelligence, that they had been blessed to the awakening of many souls—about 30, together with himself and his wife, had become in the judgment of charity, heirs of salvation. Four cases of hopeful conversion from reading the Tract, entitled “Sixteen Short Sermons,” were related to the committee.

‘In one case, a revival of religion commenced in a meeting where this Tract was read, which resulted in the hopeful conversion of more than forty persons.

‘They heard also of thirteen cases of conversion from reading the “Dairyman’s Daughter;” and twelve through the instrumentality of the “Swearer’s Prayer.”

‘One single Tract, printed by this Society, was read at a meeting in a town in this State, and was the means of awakening eight persons to a sense of their sinfulness—they were led to repentance, and all of them are now professed followers of Jesus.

‘Another Tract was instrumental in the con-

version of four persons in one family. "And," said the father to the man, who gave it to him, "I can never pay you. Take all the property and every thing I have—it shall all go, before I will part with that Tract. It was the means of my salvation—and now my wife, my second son and oldest daughter are rejoicing together with me in the faith of the gospel, in consequence of your giving me that little Tract." \*

*Helen.* 'Do you suppose all these things are true, aunt?'

*Mrs. Stanwood.* 'Yes, I have no doubt of their authenticity. They are carefully investigated, and are not submitted to public notice, till their source is ascertained and found unquestionable.'

*Helen.* 'I have heard they were all fabrications—just framed to subserve the interests of the Society.'

*Mrs. Stanwood.* 'That would prove a very dangerous and unsuccessful experiment. The public mind is too much enlightened to take any thing upon trust. You may depend upon it, in this free and inquisitive land, such fraud would have no cloak long. Besides, you forget,

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\* Pro. First Ten Yrs. Am. Tr. Soc. Page 87.

Helen, sometimes, that Christians have a principle of action entirely repugnant to art and wickedness, and that they remember, or ought to remember, God sees them--that they are commanded not to do evil that good may come; and that false witness is never blessed.'

'It is just eight,' said Mrs. Stanwood, as she pointed to the clock, 'and I must put my sleeping baby away.' She rose with Ann in her arms, and Emily followed with the little boys.

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## CHAPTER III.

THE next day, Col. Merton and Edward Sumner came in to pass the evening, just as the children were preparing to hear the story resumed. Uncle Merton said he believed Charles and Henry were not pleased to see him, while Edward declared he had not seen such a couple of forlorn faces since he left the West Indies. The boys smiled faintly, but said nothing—and Col. Merton engaged deeply in conversation with their mother, while Edward amused himself with the general plaything, little Ann.

Charles seemed vexed and uneasy; Henry looked sullen—even the countenances of William and Susan assumed, though in a less degree, the same complexion. A few whispers and occasional glances were interchanged among them, seeming to say, ‘They hoped Uncle Merton would not stay long, and they wished he had not come to spoil their story.’ Now they manifested a very wrong spirit by this impatience and selfishness, under a trifling disap-

pointment. I am happy to say, however, they soon felt the impropriety of such conduct, and endeavored to overcome it ; at length, they so far succeeded as to join cheerfully in the amusements of the rest. Several groups were soon formed in different parts of the room, and Emily, Helen and her brother composed one. The young ladies were engaged with their needles, and the generous young man was occasionally assisting them by clipping their thread with the scissors, hiding a spool of cotton, or upsetting their work-baskets. Emily rose to bring an additional light ; Edward followed, and gallantly begged the privilege of relieving her from the task of lighting it. He twisted a paper he found on the mantel-piece, and was proceeding to use it as a lamp-lighter, when the children in great consternation caught hold of him, all exclaiming, ‘ burn a Tract !’ Even little Ann, in dismay exclaimed also, ‘ a Tact, a Tact, Ed.’ Edward stopped in amazement—he dropped the Tract, and inquired in alarm, what had happened.

‘ Why, you were going to burn a Tract,’ they all cried out again, almost horror-struck. He examined the pamphlet, before he could com-

prehend the cause of such dismay, and even then was at quite a loss.

‘Well,’ said he, (as he tossed the Tract to the children, and resorted to a less sinful expedient, in their estimation, than burning a Tract,) ‘I verily believe, if I had plundered the temple of Delphi of all its treasures, I should not have committed a greater sin in the view of the Greeks, than in the opinion of these children, if I had burned that silly Tract.’

‘Silly! You do not know about Tracts then, do you,’ said Henry.

‘I’ve *heard* enough, my little fellow,’ replied Edward, rather scornfully.

‘Oh well! do tell us about them then, Edward,’ said Henry joyfully, ‘I am so glad you know all about Tracts; now we shall not lose our story after all!’ and away he ran to communicate the joyful intelligence to the other children. They, in ecstasy almost, began to collect crickets and chairs, and make great preparations for the coming treat, while Charles was whispering an apology for Edward, saying ‘he did not believe he *meant* to burn the Tract—he guessed he did not know what it was.’



Edward declared he was getting himself into fine business, as he saw the children gathering about him, and in the greatest impatience waiting for him to begin. Helen laughed till she cried, and Emily enjoyed the scene well.

‘Oh! uncle,’ cried Edward, ‘if you will but take my part, and satisfy these rapacious little bipeds—do tell them some Tract stories; you abound in them—and let me make my escape, else I actually fear, with my aggravated sin in attempting to burn that scrap, and my ignorance on this weighty subject, I shall bring down upon my guilty head a torrent, that will overwhelm me.’

‘Tracts!’ said uncle Merton, smiling complacently on the little group as they swarmed towards him, ‘what do you want to know about Tracts?’

Charles, (assuming the responsibility and importance of chief speaker,) ‘Oh any thing! uncle; facts, or operations, or plans to do more good, or any thing you please.’

‘Well, let me think,’ said uncle Merton, passing his hand thoughtfully over his brow—

‘You know, children, I have travelled much the last seven years. Shall I tell you what

I have learned of their utility, during my travels ?'

'Yes, sir, if you please, do,' said all, drawing closer and closer to uncle Merton—while Ann, with her tiny white fingers tossed back the bright curls, which were clustering too low on her forehead, and plead as earnestly as infant looks *can* plead, for the seat which was always hers, when a story was coming. The look was read and felt—Ann was seated in his lap, and then uncle Merton began—

'I suppose I need not explain to you, children, the *value* of Tracts, nor tell you how interesting they are ; for if your parents are as warm advocates for their circulation, and as deeply engaged in it, as they were when I first left America, you have been accustomed to read and judge for yourselves. Your mother, I believe, owes her conversion instrumentally to a Tract ; and through her earnest appeals and solemn warnings, I was first brought to feel my lost condition in an unregenerate state, and at length, by the grace of God, to see the value of holiness. I felt the worth of others' souls, and resolved I would leave no measures untried to convince them of the importance of religion and

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win them to Christ. I found no method more successful, and no plan so congenial to my own feelings and circumstances, as the distribution of Tracts. I therefore supplied myself liberally with them before I left home.

‘In my rambles, I entered into conversation with the poor I met, and placed Tracts in their hands. I gave them to children, to read to their parents. I occasionally dropped them by the wayside, for the passing traveller. At every turnpike, I handed the gate-keeper one, and wished him God’s blessing with it. When at an inn, I placed a Tract in the hands of the waiter, the servant-maid and the hostler; and at parting I never failed to leave two or three in the bar and the parlor. The driver I also remembered. If I sauntered about town, I looked into the habitations of the poor, talked with them affectionately, and gave the parents and children one or two of my little books. If I tarried at the house of a friend, I presented some to the children and servants. Besides these personal distributions, I sent parcels of Tracts to ministers of my acquaintance, and other friends, to be circulated in a similar manner. I gave to my friends, because I knew the

circumstance of *my* giving would recommend it to an attentive perusal. I gave to strangers, knowing curiosity would excite them to peruse its contents. In all cases, I raised a silent petition, that God would bless my trifling efforts.'

Charles was looking straight in his uncle's face, with his elbows on his knees, and his chin in his hands. 'Why could not we do so with our Tracts,' he asked.

*William.* 'If we did, perhaps we never should know, whether they had been instrumental of any good.'

*Uncle.* 'We should not refrain from doing good on that account. You know we are commanded to "cast our bread upon the waters"—can you, Charles, repeat the remainder of the passage?'

*Charles.* '“And thou shalt find it after many days.”'

Emily and Helen had insensibly drawn nearer the little circle, and were listening attentively. Even Edward had suspended his mischievous pranks, and seemed to have imbibed some of the general interest.

Emily said, 'Will you allow me, uncle, to interrupt you for a moment, with a question

somewhat foreign to your story? Will you please to explain the meaning of that text? it was always mysterious to me. I suppose it enjoins charity, but I do not see its force.'

*Helen.* 'I do not recollect, that I ever heard it before; but it strikes me now as very strange. If I should cast *my* bread into the waters, I should lose all hope of finding it again.'

'At least in an eatable state,' added Edward. The children laughed.

Now some of my readers may be surprised at so trifling an allusion to any portion of the Word of God—but I dare say, Edward and Helen Sumner had never heard or read that text in their lives. Their parents were very gay and worldly people; such as searched not the scriptures daily, or taught the value of its holy truths to their children. The Bible, at their house, was a book, whose leaves were seldom parted.

Uncle Merton did not appear to have noticed Edward's remark, or the children's laugh, but said,

'You know in the eastern country, rice and all kinds of grain are called bread. Every year the river Nile and some other eastern rivers rise

very high—the waters overflow their banks and all the surrounding country. In the meantime, the people go out in their little boats, and scatter their rice (or bread) on the waters. This is sowing it; it sinks down in the mud, and the waters cover it. It is not lost; in due time, the waters disperse, the rice springs up, and they usually have great crops. This is casting bread on the waters.'

'How beautiful the illustration!' said Emily; 'and how important in order to give many passages of scripture their full weight and force, that we should understand the manners and customs of the time and country where they were penned.'

'Now, children,' said uncle Merton, looking round with an affectionate smile on the group of little eager faces, 'I am going to tell you, that year after year, I found that delightful promise verified in my own experience, and in what I learned from others.'

'Then you heard of some, converted by the Tracts you scattered, uncle,' said Charles, putting his question in the form of an answer.

*Uncle.* 'Yes, in many instances. About two years since, as I was walking for relaxation,

I dropped the Tract, "Sixteen Short Sermons." I afterwards learned, "it fell into the hands of an unconverted, zealous advocate of Universalism. It was open to the place, where is a quotation from the first chapter of Proverbs—'Because I have called, and ye have refused.' He read it; the Holy Spirit applied it with power to his heart, and he is now a humble, pious Christian, in communion with the church."

'I heard too, "of three Tracts, thrown out of the window of a coach, one fell into the hands of a youth, who went home declaring he would never attend a cock-fight again, while he lived. When some one inquired the reason, he replied, 'I have read something so awful about a cock-fighter, that by the help of God, I will never witness such sports again.' He remembered his word, and in a few months joined a society of pious persons in the neighborhood. The Tract was "The Swearer's Prayer."

'At one time, having found a religious soldier in one of the regiments, stationed where I was a temporary resident, I gave him some Tracts to distribute among his comrades; he gave some to each man in the room, except one, who was so profligate a character, he feared to offer him

any, lest he should meet with abusive and profane language. But God, who has the hearts of all men at his disposal, it seems, had thoughts of mercy towards this man; he took one of those the distributor left in the room, and read it with great attention. He was led to cry to the Saviour for mercy, and afterwards evidenced a renewed mind, by a constant attendance on the means of grace, and love to the cause of Christ.'

'A gentleman once told me, he "dropped two small Tracts by the wayside; a wicked ship-carpenter found them, and uttered a volley of horrible imprecations, with some opprobrious language against the description of persons, supposed to have scattered them. He had not proceeded far when he found another. It had fallen into the middle of the road, in the mud. He uttered another dreadful oath, and exclaimed he 'would not take up that.' He passed it a short distance, then suddenly turned round, leaped over a ditch between him and the carriage-road, and having picked up the Tract, began to read it; it was the "Swearer's Prayer." After reading a few lines, he came to these words, "Tremble, swearer, while I tell thee,"



Immediately the stout hearted sinner began literally to tremble. He felt himself slain by the commandment, guilty and self-condemned. He returned home in great distress of mind, and so continued about three months, when he found peace with God, through justifying faith in Christ, and has since walked agreeably to the gospel."

'A lady, with whom I was conversing on the utility of Tracts, once told me, "she presented one to an officer in the Royal Navy, while on a visit at Bristol, England. Soon as he ascertained what it was, he threw it from him with disdain, thinking himself insulted by being placed on a level with the poor, for whose use alone he considered Tracts were intended. The lady was not in the least intimidated; but observing he was fond of smoking a pipe in the summer-house, she placed the "Swearer's Prayer" on the floor, as if by accident. He observed it, and had the curiosity to examine what it was; finding it a Tract, he was on the point of throwing it away, but being alone, his pride did not take alarm as in the former instance. He read it with astonishment and with gratitude to God, for not having cut him off in

his sinful courses—became an anxious inquirer, was directed to Jesus, “whose blood cleanseth from all sin,” and found rest to his soul. He became as eminent for piety, as he had been for profaneness.” ’

Col. Merton paused a moment, and Charles asked if he could not think of any more.

‘Yes, my boy,’ said uncle Merton; ‘I heard of “a young man in B——, who, to use his own language, could swear as well as the best of them, and had been often entreated by his mother and sister, who were pious, to read “the Swearer’s Prayer, or his oath explained.” But he always objected until one day, carelessly taking it up, he became interested, and found he was in the hand of God, who could any time arrest his breath, as he had done that of others. He saw this would have been just in God, and wondered he had not done it. He said, he was obliged to harden his heart to refrain from shedding tears, and feared to leave the room, lest the family should discover the agitation of his mind. Suffice it to say, this little Tract hopefully proved the power of God to his salvation. He has since been admitted into the Baptist church in that town.” ’

‘Do you suppose, uncle,’ said Edward, ‘that these reformatations are entire and lasting?’

*Uncle.* ‘Yes, I do. I will not say, cases have not occurred where the individual has manifested no deep, saving change; but “by their fruits, ye shall know them.” It is, however, true, that many, even of the most vicious and abandoned, reformed by the influence of Tracts, have lived for years to testify the reality of their conversion by lives of holiness, and usefulness in the cause of Christ.’

*Edward.* ‘Two years ago, I should fully have disbelieved these stories; and even now, I find some difficulty in giving entire credence to them. To be sure, when I was returning from the West Indies, my opinion of Tracts was somewhat altered, when I saw their influence on some of our hardened crew. In many cases, I confess, a surprising change was manifested; the most dissolute and vile became serious and moral—but I never thought it would last long. I have seen as much anxiety manifested by them to obtain a Tract, as I should feel to obtain a kingdom.’

*Helen,* (much surprised.) ‘Then *you* begin to believe in Tracts, brother. Well, I must

confess you surprise me, for I never saw any one so bitter in their opposition to 'Tracts and missionaries, as you, yourself was three years ago.'

*Edward.* 'I think they are paltry things still; and I must say I deem it petty, low business, when I see people dealing them out to others. My own pride would be quite insulted, if an offer of one were made to me; yet I think they have done, and may still do good among the poorest class, for whom they were designed—though as I said before, I am not yet fully convinced, that the effect they produce is more than a partial, temporary reformation. We seldom hear of any conversions through their instrumentality, (I believe I use the right term,) among genteel, educated people.'

'Pardon me, Edward,' interrupted Col. Merton, 'if I say, you are greatly mistaken there. I could name to you many, very many instances in confirmation of the contrary.'

*Edward.* 'Perhaps so, uncle—but I am afraid they will have happened in England, France or India, or at least so far off as to preclude the possibility of substantiating the statement by our own observation, or by testi-

mony, which has not been handed down, *down, down* till it is so warped and altered, as scarcely to retain a trace of its original features.'

*Uncle.* 'Not so, either; you remember young Dr. N——, do you not?'

*Edward.* 'Oh yes, very well; he was my chum you know in college, and a very wild chap was he. I have not seen him since we graduated, five years ago. He was, without exception, the most staunch infidel I ever knew.'

*Uncle.* 'And so I have been told he continued, till about three years since. His belief in infidelity acquired such strength, and was avowed and supported with such uniform and unblushing firmness, that very little hope was entertained that he would ever renounce his error. But even the most hardened and obstinate opposers sometimes bow after years of rebellion. He is now as distinguished for decided, active piety, as he was for unshrinking, zealous efforts in his infidel cause.'

Edward made no reply, but a long, deep, serious 'ah!' the varying hue of his fine countenance, however, told how unexpected this intelligence proved.

It was unobserved by uncle Merton, who con-

tinued : ' The " Praying Negro " fell into his hands ; he read her history—her supplications for the best of Heaven's blessings on her cruel and relentless master, under the biting lash of whose whip she was still smarting—her prayers that her master might be forgiven—that he might repent of his sins, be washed in the blood of Christ, and forever be made holy and happy.

' This was too much for his proud infidel heart. *He* had no disposition to forgive, much less to pray for his enemies. What manner of spirit was this, that could thus endure, forgive ? Ah, it was the spirit of Christ ; a spirit to which he was a stranger. His boasted philosophy sunk into contempt—his infidel opinions were renounced, his infidel books burned ; and when committing the last of them to the flames, he exclaimed, " In the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ and these witnesses, I now solemnly renounce all the errors contained in this book." He warns with much affection and faithfulness, those whom he once led astray, and entreats them to renounce their errors, and embrace the Saviour. His labors are not in vain, for Christians are animated and sinners alarmed.'

There was a long, deep, solemn pause after

uncle Merton concluded the account of Dr. N——. It was at length interrupted by Mrs. Stanwood, who said, ‘I had the pleasure of meeting him about a year after his renunciation of infidelity, and I think I never saw so holy, devout and humble a Christian.’

‘Uncle,’ said Charles, ‘did you ever hear of any *children*, who were converted by means of reading Tracts?’

*Uncle.* ‘Oh yes, many; and of several gay, thoughtless young ladies, likewise. I heard of one instance of the conversion of a little boy in Boston. “A lady handed a few Tracts to him, when calling on an errand. As he received them, his eye fell on the words, “Seek first the kingdom of heaven, and all other things shall be added unto you.” He immediately thought, I am seeking first the things of this world, and they afford me no happiness. The same day, while in school, the same words returned to his mind. He drew the Tracts from his pocket, and leaning over his slate, read till he was so deeply affected with a view of his sinfulness and need of a change of heart, that he could no longer remain where he was. He obtained permission to leave the school, returned home, and

retired to his chamber ; there he offered his first sincere prayer, and there resolved he would serve the Lord. He has since become hopefully pious, immediately wished to do something for the cause of benevolence, and now desires, I am told, to devote himself to the gospel ministry."

" I knew a Miss S. too, a thoughtless, giddy girl, but one, like many others, fond of reading, though not particular in her choice of books. The " Dairyman's Daughter " fell into her hands, and excited her attention. She was led to inquire what she should do to obtain that, on which rested the hope of that interesting saint. She was enabled to put her trust in Christ, and is now a member of the church."

' I have talked so fast and so long,' said uncle Merton, ' that I begin to fear by my hoarseness, talking will be no benefit to my lungs, in their present state ; and I see, too, you little ones have wiled from me more time than I had intended staying this evening.'

' But *must* you go—can't you tell us any more stories to-night ?' said Charles and Henry in one breath, and taking hold of his hands, as if



to prevent his determination to go. Even Ann clung closer to him, and flung her little arms about his neck to detain him.

William and Susan urged his stay; while Mrs. Stanwood and the young ladies regretted he must leave so soon.

‘But uncle,’ said Charles, ‘you have not told us *half* you know, have you?’

‘I presume not,’ replied uncle Merton, smiling; ‘and I am sorry I cannot tell you more now. There is much I should like to say about the “Monthly Distribution of Tracts,” and the wants of the Valley of the Mississippi; but I do not see as I can possibly stay now,’ said he, withdrawing his hand from Charles’ earnest grasp, and looking at his watch.

‘Muss tum adin,’ said little Ann, bending her head back, and looking earnestly in his face. He took the child in his arms again, and imprinted a warm kiss on her little plump rosy cheek—and then said, ‘Well, I will come again the very first evening I am disengaged.’

‘An’ tell ’tory?’ asked the little prattler.

‘Yes,’ said uncle Merton, looking archly at Charles, ‘and I will tell *all* I know, next time.’

Edward seemed in quite a thoughtful mood, though he tried to appear careless and unconcerned. Notwithstanding his sister's entreaties to remain, he rose, and bidding all good evening, withdrew with his uncle Merton.

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## CHAPTER IV.

THE following afternoon was delightful. The sun shone in all his splendor, and the air was unusually mild. It was one of those lovely days in the fall, so bright and cheerful, that every thing seems to wear a smile, and your own spirits partake so much of the sprightliness abroad, you are led to wish autumn were always like it.

The children finished their lessons at a much earlier hour than usual, and Emily promised they should accompany Helen and herself in their afternoon ramble among the neighboring poor, as a reward for their diligence. For several months, Emily had been the family-teacher. No efforts or expense had been spared in her education, while her superior talents and assiduity in their cultivation, had rendered her by far the most accomplished young lady in the village.

She left school at seventeen ; but she did not feel as many young ladies do, at that period,

that her education was *completed*, and rejoice that farther cultivation was needless—nor did she feel, that the learned lore in her head incapacitated her hands for domestic duties, or for any thing in real, every-day life but adorning her fair person, and setting off her intellectual charms and cultivated taste by a frequent allusion to Virgil and Cicero, and a display of her surprising skill on the piano-forte and guitar. No; the gratitude she felt to her parents for their kindness and their sacrifices to promote her improvement, led her to seek every opportunity to manifest it by relieving their cares, and endeavoring to increase their happiness.

She offered to instruct the four younger children, that she might lessen the expense of their education, and still improve herself. Emily possessed dignity and firmness, and the circumstance, that she was a *sister*, deducted not at all from her power of governing them, as it is frequently apt to do. All was order and harmony, and the rapid improvement, his brothers and sisters made, led William sometimes to wish he too might be permitted to become her pupil.

But I have digressed far from my story. I have said, a walk was proposed, and at the ap-

pointed time, all sallied forth. The younger ones bounded over the ground, like a flock of deer—as blithe as merry hearts could be. Each one chose his own path, and sought his own pleasures. Charles delighted to run on before, and excite the surprise of his companions by daring feats on the elastic branches of some tall, bare tree, while Henry stood by, longing for the day, when *he* could do such marvellous things. Susan wandered about, with her hood fallen back and resting on her shoulder, while the gentle wind tossed about unheeded her long, glossy ringlets. Although loaded with bundles of warm clothing for some, and baskets of choice things for others, each had found room for one small parcel, which seemed in the estimation of the carrier to possess more value than all the rest. It was a bundle of Tracts.

‘Where are you going first?’ asked Charles.

‘To carry this little basket of nice things to the old Scotch woman, Mrs. More,’ replied Emily.

‘And where next?’ said Henry, running along before them backwards, jumping and prancing about like a little colt.

*Emily.* ‘To the widow Stone’s, with these

clothes to fit out the children for the Sabbath school.'

'Well, this is our way, then,' said Charles, directing his course to a narrow, but well-trodden foot-path in the woods. The rest followed slowly and in silence, till they emerged from the thicket to a large, open plain.

Susan then turned to Emily and said, (casting her eye at an elegant summer residence directly in view,) 'Do you know what Major Somerton says about you and your Tracts?'

Emily replied in the negative.

'Why what does he say?' inquired Helen, with more curiosity than Emily manifested.

*Susan.* 'He says, (I believe I can repeat his own words,) "he is surprised, that a young lady of Miss Stanwood's intellect and refinement, should demean herself by engaging in such small, low business as scattering Tracts."'

Emily smiled.

Helen was quite discomposed, and almost ready to drop *her* Tracts.

*Susan.* 'I cannot tell, Emily, how many remarks people make about our doings. William says, we are the town-talk.'

*Helen.* (Quite alarmed.) ‘I think *myself*, we are going too far.’

Susan laughed at her timid cousin.

*Emily.* ‘Much as I value Major Somerton’s opinions generally, his remarks on this subject or any other connected with Christian usefulness, would exert little influence; our views here entirely differ.’

*Helen.* ‘But I think we ought to pay proper deference to public opinion; and when the whole community are in arms against us, we ought to examine and see if there is not cause. We may be blinded, you know, by zeal and enthusiasm, and run so far beyond all propriety as to need a check.’

*Emily.* ‘There are few, who need *checks* to their benevolence; *spurs* would be more generally useful.’

*Susan.* ‘We must hurry—the boys are quite out of patience; they are even now waiting at the door.’

They quickened their pace, and soon entered the lowly, shattered dwelling of the aged Mrs. More. The old lady’s furrowed face brightened with smiles, as she looked over her spectacles, and saw the well known face of Emily—for in

many an hour of sorrow and want, she had been her comforter. Emily soon presented her gift. 'A thousand blessings on you, Miss Emily,' said the good old woman, as a tear trembled in her eye—'you may not know in this short life all the Saviour has promised to those, who are good to the poor—but you will know in heaven, I trow.

'And the Tracts you left, Miss, every word is good to my soul. Many's the comfort one finds in them. Oh if my boy that's far away could but cast his eye on such a page as this, perhaps he would turn and love the God his father loved.'

Emily did not tarry long to hear the good woman's thanks, or the sad tale of her thankless son, who left her in her widowhood to walk down the steep of life to the grave, alone. She promised to call again soon, and took her leave.

They soon distributed their various parcels, and many were the blessings invoked on their heads by the children of poverty.

Emily called next at a very small pretty building, at the foot of the hill. She was received at this place with a less hearty welcome than usual. Quite a bustle was made however, to collect chairs for the visitors and to treat them in the



most polite and ceremonious manner, though awkward and clumsy enough was the attempt. But Mrs. Jennings had formerly lived at service a fortnight or more in a genteel family, and she prided herself ever after on the fact that she had seen as good company as any body. She was, to do her justice, a very tidy woman, but a notorious talker, and very ignorant—and it was her misfortune to think she was endowed with an uncommon share of sense and discernment. She was therefore the more forward in giving her opinions on any subject, and approving or condemning any plans or any persons.

The company were scarcely seated, and a few inquiries relative to her children, who were Sabbath school scholars, made, when she began—

‘So ye’ve got in your hands a lot more of them ’ere scand’lous Tracts, as ye call ’em. I hope ye’re not going to sprinkle ’em in here; we’re not so poor as to ha’ come to the need o’ them yet, if we don’t look like you gentlefolks, with our carpets and sekertaries and burrows and sich like. An’ its my opinion, that them ’ere books ought all to be burnt in the fire—an’ I’d be willin’, for my part, to build it with my

own hands, 'fore I'd set my neighbors to runnin' mad wi' the readin' of 'em.'

'I do not know as I understand you, Mrs. Jennings,' said Emily.

*Mrs. Jennings.* 'I mean as how Mary Mel-  
len over here's run crazy, poor thing, and hears  
to no reason, just for the reading of one of them  
'ere 'Tracts that you left. For my part, *I* think  
it's as bad to put a body to death one way as  
another, provided they die in the end.

'They say she's not quite so raving to-day,  
poor soul—la' here she is now comin', pale as a  
ghost, and bless me, she's not a thing on her  
head.'

*(Mary taps at the door gently and enters ;  
smiles as she sees Miss Emily.)*

*Emily.* 'I am glad to see you to-day, Mary ;  
are you all well at home ?'

'Quite well, Miss, thank you. I saw you  
come in, and could not but run over to thank  
you for the 'Tract you gave me.' (weeps.)

*Mrs. Jennings.* 'There, it's just as I told  
you ; poor thing !—she's lost her reason. Well,  
I'm glad 'tisu't I that will have to 'flect on *my-*  
*self.*'

'Lost my reason !' exclaimed Mary. 'Ah !

Mrs. Jennings, I never was in my right senses till now ; and I shall thank Miss Emily here, as long as I live.'

'Poor 'wilderer thing!' said Mrs. Jennings, in a compassionating voice.

'Yes,' said Mary ; 'they all think I lost my reason, because I was distressed for my soul, and felt my sins. Oh ! if they would but lose theirs too, if its loss brings such peace of mind as I now have.'

*Emily.* 'Then you feel you can love the Saviour, and you find him precious—'

*Mary.* 'Ah yes, Miss Emily, he *is* precious indeed. I feel that I love him now. I *did* feel distressed, when I thought how ungrateful and wicked I had been—how I had misimproved my privileges in the Sabbath school, and how Christ had died for me too—and I feel grieved *now* ; but it does not seem as if I could help loving him for his mercy to me. I wish, Miss Emily, you could but spare time to come and see my parents—'

Emily declined then, for prudent reasons ; but promised to call within a day or two.

Mrs. Jennings was astonished at what she had seen and heard. She could but acknow-

ledge in her heart, that Mary Mellen never appeared more sane than now. She muttered something about a strange world, and she'd never seen the like o' this, as Emily and her companions retired. Emily's heart was full, as she thought perhaps *one* poor soul might be rescued by means of so small an effort on her part, and she resolved to labor more for Christ, and pray more for souls than she had ever done before.

The incidents of the walk had greatly awakened the interest of the children,—had deepened the feelings of Emily, and convinced Helen of the reality of a something, which she did not possess, and which it seemed was attainable by reflection and repentance. A continuance of the narrative of 'Tracts was anticipated this evening with more than usual impatience. Mrs. Stanwood's full heart glowed too with unusual fervor, as she saw the kindling hearts of her children—and she prayed most earnestly, that seeds of benevolence might now be implanted, which should bring forth fruit abundantly in future active exertion and devotion to the cause of Christ.

How many children there are of pious parents,

even of benevolent and efficient Christians, who are more ignorant of our charitable institutions and their operations, than the children of some of those whose purse-strings were never loosed for the sake of Christ. Is this as it should be? Oh that parents felt more deeply the immense influence they might exert, independent of personal efforts, in promoting the cause of our Saviour, by awakening an early interest in the hearts of their children, in our charitable institutions. How can this be done, but by making them acquainted with the wants, efforts and results of each, and by leading them to feel, that young as they are, *their* exertions are needed in the blessed cause; by training them up also to liberal efforts, of which they shall enlarge the sphere, as their ability increases. Habits of benevolence will thus be acquired; they will strengthen with years, till they will say, 'If as *children* we could do so much to advance the cause, what ought we to do as *men*.' What a host of benevolent spirits, with liberal hands, glowing hearts, and enlightened understandings, would twenty years hence come up to the help of the Lord, if all Christian parents would but feel it as important their children should be in-

formed of all the benevolent efforts of the day, as themselves. We should hear no societies mourning over small means—and if all “the isles of the sea” should say, “come over and help us,” there would be no response, ‘we cannot for want of funds;’ and might we not also hope the present dearth of ministers of the gospel and devoted missionary spirits would not continue—for if “he that watereth shall be watered also himself,” and “he that lendeth to the Lord shall receive as much again,” perhaps the blessings in return might be holy hearts, noble spirits, and glowing love to the souls of men—and what might not such a host, in the strength of the Lord, do.

The hour for the story came; Charles was in perfect readiness, with his eyes and ears open half an hour previous. He took occasion five or six times to remind his mother, that she left off at 1822.

William turned to Emily as soon as he was seated, and said, ‘It is estimated that \$28,000,000 are expended annually in the United States; for what do you think, Emily?’

*Emily.* (pausing,) ‘I do not know, without it is for the support of our government, and in liquidating our national debt.’

‘No, that is not right—what do you think, Helen?’

*Helen.* ‘I am sure I cannot tell; it’s a vast sum—\$28,000,000—what is it for?’

*William.* ‘It is expended in the bare support of nothing more or less than RUM. I read it to-day, somewhere.’

Even little Henry blushed with shame for his country.

‘But that is not all,’ said William. ‘It is estimated, that our country annually pays or loses in time wasted by drunkards at four cents an hour, and in the support of paupers, at the rate of \$120,000,000 by intemperance—a sum sixty times as much as the aggregate of all expended by the principal religious charitable societies in Europe and America. It would supply every family on earth with a Bible, in eight months—it would support a missionary or teacher among every two thousand souls on the globe!!!!’

‘Is it possible!’ said Emily, thoughtfully; ‘at this rate, what will become of our country?’

‘But you know, sister,’ said Henry, in a soothing tone, ‘there are *Temperance Societies* now; and not half so much money will be wasted for spirit as there used to be.’

‘Yes,’ added Charles, ‘and Christians will give double the money now to Bible, Missionary and Tract Societies, I suppose. Oh! what a sum the Tract Society will have! what large donations! they will be entirely out of debt. Did they not have two or three millions more of dollars the last year, because less rum was used?’

*Mother.* ‘I will tell you soon—but you must not calculate too fast—your hopes must not be raised too high. I shall begin where I left off at 1822, and shall soon reach 1829,—and then you will know.’

*William.* ‘What were their receipts in 1822?’

*Mother.* ‘Three thousand six hundred and ninety-nine dollars and forty cents.’

*William.* ‘More than \$2000 less than the year before.’

*Emily.* ‘The agent, Mr. Dwight, had resigned, I suppose.’

*Mother.* ‘Yes; he was commissioned for the term of one year only, you remember. The agency was renewed again in October of this year, and Mr. William A. Hallock accepted the appointment of agent.’

*Charles.* ‘How many Tracts were printed, and Depositories formed?’



*Mother.* ‘255,000 Tracts were issued, and ten Depositories established.’

*William.* ‘That makes eighty-one now in operation.’

*Mother.* ‘45,000 pages of Tracts were this year sent to missionaries at Bombay, for distribution. In the vicinity of Bombay, India, were eleven millions of people, all speaking one language, and but three missionaries. Tracts can be printed in their language as cheap as ours, and what vast good they might do. A missionary, who had labored many years there, in a letter to the Committee, writes—“The state of the heathen in India is such, that Tracts are the only books, which afford any considerable prospect of usefulness, particularly in those parts where missionaries cannot go.” “Thousands of them never in their lives read half as much as the New Testament; they would not have patience to read a tenth part of the Bible, were it presented to them—whereas they would gladly sit down and read a Tract of a few pages, which, if judiciously written, would convey important instruction to their minds.” “There is a great call for Tracts to furnish the many hundreds of children in the mission schools. These

children are all anxious to read every thing that comes from our press. Among the native Catholics, many Tracts might be profitably distributed. There are nearly a thousand Jews also in the place, he states ; and they do not feel those strong prejudices to Jesus of Nazareth, that many of their brethren do ; but listen with interest to the missionaries, and might be easily led to a knowledge of the Messiah, who was cut off for their sins." He sums up all with this opinion—" he knows of no field where Tract Societies might act with a greater prospect of usefulness than at our foreign mission stations." "

*Emily.* ' And all that is wanting to supply them with Tracts, is funds, I suppose.'

*Mother.* ' Yes ; and my heart sometimes aches at the thought, that our missionaries toil and labor, and then sit down to weep and mourn, because they see so little fruit—while if Christians would but feel as they ought, and give accordingly, our missionaries might accomplish double what they now do, with the same expense of time and toil—but now they are cramped in effort—limited in their measures—harassed and perplexed, and doubtless their

very hearts faint, as they view the moral wastes around, and see what *might* be done, and yet cannot be for want of means.'

*William.* 'I'll have a charity-box this very day, and turn beggar; and if nobody else will make a stir in their behalf, I will, if it is not felt beyond these walls. I have some pocket-money of my own; I will begin with that—and if you, Helen, Emily, and the rest of you, do not through fear put your money out of your hands before my box is done, I shall attack you with such an appeal in behalf of the heathen as will harrow up your very soul, and extort *tears*, if I can't collect *cents*.'

*Charles.* 'Do not be in such a hurry; I long to have mother come to 1829, because I expect, now people do not spend so much for ardent spirits, they will feel more able to give to the Tract Society; and, I suppose in 1829, we shall find the Treasury so full, they will not *need* the little *we* can do. Mother, please to tell us the receipts of 1823.'

*Mother.* 'They were \$4,184 24. During the few months of Mr. Hallock's agency, previous to their annual meeting in May, he had personally visited 128 towns and parishes,

and by frequent preaching, conversation and epistolary correspondence on the duty and utility of circulating Religious Tracts, had engaged the hearts of Christians strongly in its favor. Eighty one persons, during the year, became life members of the Society—sixty nine of them were ministers of the gospel. Several instructors were made life members by their pupils, and one little boy, I remember, by his father; his name was Henry.”

*Henry.* ‘I never knew little boys could be made life members. Why does not father make us so?’

*William.* ‘Let us see, there are six of us. I rather think father would almost wish he had not so many children. Six times twenty is 120—\$120 would be quite a sum, Emily.’

*Emily.* ‘Yes; and you know we should be entitled to three fourths of that sum in Tracts, at cost’

*William.* ‘I should rather relinquish my share, and devote the whole donation to the Society. I heard some person say the other day, that \$20 would keep a Tract of four pages in perpetual circulation.’

*Susan.* ‘I believe, mother, you did not tell us how many Tracts were printed this year.’

*Mother.* ‘470,000, I think. Thirteen Depositories were formed also. Letters were received from many of our southern and western States, earnestly requesting Tract Depositories might be established. Applications were also made from Ceylon, Canada, and various portions of South America for Tracts, stating the vast field those places offered for their circulation.

‘A missionary in Ceylon writes, “We visit from two to eight families in a day. Sometimes we take long journeys, and are out six or eight days, taking with us some of the boys from the schools. At such times, particularly, we feel the need of Tracts. Passing through villages where the gospel was never before heard, we find hundreds who can, and who *would* read, had we books or Tracts to give them. But alas, we have none! No Bible, no Tract to show the poor heathen how to flee from the wrath to come. The only Tracts we have ever had, have been written upon the olla.”’

*Charles.* ‘What is the *olla*?’

*Mother.* ‘The leaf of the Palmyra tree.’

‘The missionary continues: “Perhaps in all our missions, we have distributed 200 obtained in that way. O, that we had a supply printed.

Into how many villages could the gospel be sent by means of Tracts. How many souls, by a single Tract, might be saved from endless misery.”

William rose and walked the room.

‘Do you suppose, mother,’ he asked, after a few moments, ‘that Christians *know* these facts? If they do, why are not these wants supplied?’

*Mother.* ‘Many Christians *know* and *feel* them, and give of the wealth God has bestowed, to the extent of their means; and their gifts are sanctified and devoted to God by earnest prayer—and such donations, I doubt not are truly acceptable to the Lord, and will be blessed; but I fear there are many, who profess allegiance to the Lord, of whose abundance but a few mites find their way into *his* treasury, and who are almost entirely ignorant of the moral wants of the world.’

*Emily.* ‘But if Christians will not act, who will? What is to be done? We cannot expect the *impenitent* to come up to the help of the Lord.’

*William.* ‘I will, though; if there is any thing I can do, I’ll do it.’

A tear trembled in Mrs. Stanwood’s eye, and

a silent petition arose to her Saviour for a blessing on her boy—her first-born son ; a child of many prayers and tears, whom she had dedicated in faith to his holy service before he could lisp the name of mother, and for whom she had ever felt the most ardent, and even sometimes agonizing desire to see meekly sitting at the feet of Jesus.

‘Do *one* thing, my dear child,’ said his mother, ‘and then, Christ strengthening, you can do all things—can do much to save this ruined world. Give your heart to the Saviour—do but love and serve him ; there’s vast room for laborers in his vineyard yet.’

There was quite a pause. William unclosed the shutter, and remained looking out the window some time. Emily at length interrupted the deep silence by saying, ‘We can do much as a family. If you, mother, will direct the efforts of us, children, even *we* can do something. If you approve, I will make an effort to form a Juvenile Tract Society in the village, auxiliary to the Ladies’ Society—’

*Susan.* ‘Why, you belong to that now.’

*Emily.* ‘Yes ; but I can join both. Even if we did not raise more than \$25 in a year—

if the same were done in every town, in Massachusetts, (and there are 293,) the sum of \$7,400 might be raised by children and youth.' Mrs. Stanwood approved Emily's plan, and the children were anxious to have a subscription paper immediately drawn, and to put their names down that minute.

But Mrs. Stanwood told them she had much more to say. 'They promised quietly to listen, and she continued, 'I will relate two or three facts, which were communicated to the committee this year, and then I will tell you the proceedings of the next.'

'The Tract, entitled "Sixteen Short Sermons," was instrumental in the conversion of a little boy in this State.'

(Charles drew close to his mother and listened very attentively.)

"He read till he came to the third sermon, which is from this text, "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." This appeared to be for *him*. He felt he had sinned, and, in a thousand instances come short of the glory of God. He became deeply distressed, began from that time to "search the scriptures daily," and to seek the salvation of his soul. In a few



months, he obtained, as he hopes, joy and peace in believing in Jesus. He was admitted a member of the visible church, has since been preparing for the ministry, and is now about to enter upon its sacred duties."

"The Young Cottager" was handed to a young lady in this commonwealth. As she read it, an involuntary tear started from her eye, and offended with herself for being overcome by a Tract, she threw it down, and resolved to have nothing more to do with it. But she could not rest, till she had read farther. She was again affected even to tears, and angrily threw it down. But she could not rest then; she took it again, and at length read it through. An impression was fastened upon her mind, which there is reason to believe will be eternal. 'What,' said she, 'can this poor cottager so bewail her sins, and I, who am ten-fold more guilty, feel no relentings?' Days and weeks of anguish, on account of her sins, passed away; she wandered in darkness and saw no light. But at length a ray from the Sun of Righteousness broke in upon her, and she was brought out of darkness into marvellous light. For years she has now been engaged in seeking

out the poor and destitute, distributing among them Bibles and Religious Tracts, instructing them in Sabbath schools, and exciting her acquaintance to greater and more systematical efforts for the salvation of men.'

Mrs. Stanwood paused.

Charles said, 'Do, mother, tell us more facts!'

*Mother.* 'I remember reading an interesting fact, communicated by an agent of a Tract Society in England. He gave a Tract to a poor black man, who had just landed from an American vessel, and was consulting with the rest of his crew how to spend the evening. After some consideration, they all decided upon their different pursuits, except the black man, whom they left behind. Observing this, the gentleman asked how it happened he did not go with his brother seamen. He replied, "Oh, me poor man, me no money, me go on board and read de songs." "What, then," said he, "you can read!" "Oh yes," was the answer. The agent then took from his pocket the Swearer's Prayer, and said, "Perhaps you will read this; it will be something new to you." The Tract was accepted, and the gentleman saw nothing more

of him till some time after, when he was accosted in the street in the following manner: " 'Tank you sir, for de book." "What book, my good fellow?" "De book of life, dat you gave me two years ago." Not remembering ever to have given him a Bible, he remained wondering, when the poor fellow exclaimed it was "de Swearer's Prayer—and me did read it to all de crew, and not one of dem do swear now. Oh it is de book of life."'

Just at this moment, Mr. Stanwood opened the door. 'I've some good news for you, my boys,' said he. 'Uncle Merton is coming to see you to-morrow evening; I believe his visit is to be exclusively to you.'

This information was the cause of great joy to all. Charles said, he would have the great arm-chair, that Uncle Merton liked so well, all ready in due time in his favorite corner; it was also agreed Henry should sit nearest his Uncle, and Charles took the liberty of promising Ann a seat in his lap.

William was whispering half an hour after his father's intelligence to Helen and Emily; but nothing could be heard save here and there

the words 'charity-box' and 'contribution,' 'after,' 'if she,' and 'help.'

As soon as Charles and Henry had made arrangements to their minds, Henry drew his chair to the side of his father, and asked him, 'if he thought it was a good plan for boys and girls to become life members of the Tract Society.' His father said, 'Certainly, my son ;' and then there was a pause.

In a few minutes, Henry said, 'Mother told us to-night of a gentleman, who made his little boy a member.'

Mr. Stanwood said nothing, and there was another long pause.

*Henry.* 'It takes \$120 to make six life members, does it not, father ?'

'Father,' said William, 'Henry wants to ask, if you will make us all life members of the Tract Society ?'

*Father,* (smiling.) 'And what would you all do to earn it ?'

'Oh, any thing,' said the three boys.

*Father,* (pausing thoughtfully.) 'Well, I will make you all life members, but upon certain conditions. If Emily continues as faith-

fully to discharge her office as instructress for three months to come, she will merit it. William must complete Cicero and Sallust; Susan, merit Emily's entire approbation for assiduity and gentleness; Charles must finish Liber Primus; Henry must study diligently, be obedient and gentle, and in every sense of the word, a good boy.'

The children said they would all do as father wished, and jumped about in such glee, that the younger ones soon became weary and sleepy, and were obliged to retire; and Mrs. Stanwood deferred all other accounts till another time.

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## CHAPTER V.

THE fire burned unusually bright, the great arm-chair was adjusted, Henry was in his place, and all the rest were waiting with great anxiety on the following evening for Uncle Merton's arrival. The time seemed very long, and still he did not come; a hundred reasons were framed among them for his delay, and as many apologies offered for his tardiness, but they served to allay their restlessness only in a very slight degree. William at length begged his mother to continue her account of the American Tract Society till he came, that the time passed in expectation might not be so tedious. The rest added their entreaties to William's, and Mrs. Stanwood proceeded to relate the events of 1824. She rose, and taking several letters from her work-box, said, 'I believe I will read to you first several interesting extracts from these.

'This one,' said she, opening a letter very closely written, 'relates to the moral state of the West. I copied the facts it contains to read

at a Female Tract Meeting a few years since, with the hope it might excite a deeper interest for that portion of our country. The original communication was penned by a missionary, who had been laboring several months in New Orleans. It is dated,

*“August 18, 1824.*

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‘ Our Western States present a vast field for the distribution of Tracts. The inhabitants along the Ohio and Mississippi rivers are but partially supplied with the scriptures, have few churches except in the large towns, hear only occasional sermons, and these at uncertain intervals ; they receive few Tracts, and scarcely any of the religious publications, which are doing so much in the Eastern and Middle portions of our country. The Tracts I had the pleasure to distribute among them were received with apparent avidity ; and the thanks, invariably expressed, evidently came from the heart. But let me pass to the consideration of that city, whose spiritual necessities will awaken the sympathy of the benevolent and intelligent Chris-

tian, as much as its commercial relations and prospects will raise his wonder. It has been truly said, the position of New Orleans certainly destines it to be the greatest city the world has ever seen. The Mississippi, with its two thousand tributary streams, drains more than 1,400,000 square miles; a portion of country, nearly equal in extent to the whole Roman Empire in the days of her proudest Consuls. The American population of this region is already nearly 3,000,000. Of the 350,000, annually adding to our population, a very large proportion is settling in this Valley. Of the 40,000 permanent population of New Orleans, 25 or 30,000 are Catholics; the remaining 10 or 15,000, Protestant or anti-Catholics.

‘ To show the state of public morals, it may be said, six licensed gambling houses pay an annual tax of \$30,000 to the State, and men of business affirm, that more bargains are made on the Sabbath, than on any other day of the week. On that day, the stores are open; ships and steam-boats are lading, troops are parading, and in the evening the ball, the masquerade, the gambling house and theatre give but too fearful evidence of moral death. The few Christians



in that city are either poor, or in moderate circumstances. In various ways, their charities are called for, and cheerfully bestowed to an extent, that would astonish even the more liberal and benevolent in our highly favored New England. In the great work of reforming the city ; of giving religious instruction to the various classes of men of business resorting thither from all quarters, to the clerks and youth generally, the mariners and boatmen ; of founding institutions, which shall affect millions of our race in our own and foreign lands, onward till the end of time, they look for assistance to Christian benevolence in the North. Shall they look in vain ? Will not the American Tract Society, by an appropriation of Tracts, give encouragement and vigor to their efforts ?

Mrs. Stanwood closed the letter. Emily remarked, ‘She had no idea any part of our country was in so deplorable a state as to morals and religion.’

*Mother.* ‘This letter, remember, was written five years ago. Since the Rev. Messrs. Cornelius and Larned labored there in 1817 and 1818, improvement is visible ; but still a lamentable

degree of immorality and vice prevail, and Tracts appear to be the best and only possible mode of conveying the truths of the gospel to its numerous inhabitants, till we send sufficient laborers into the harvest. Here is a letter,' said Mrs. Stanwood, as she opened another, 'which accompanied a sword, given as a donation to the Society—'

'A sword! mother,' said the children.

*Mother.* 'Yes;' I will read it.

"From my youth, I have enrolled myself among the defenders of my country, and have recently passed through the several grades of military office to that of Captain. This I did, not because I delighted to gird myself with the armory of death, or was proud of appearing in military decorations; but because my Bible commands me to be subject to the powers that be, since they are ordained of God.

"Having received my discharge, I now present my sword to the American Tract Society, to be disposed of so as to aid in hastening that glorious time, when all swords shall be beaten into ploughshares, and all spears into pruning hooks; when all the tumult of war shall be

hushed in everlasting silence, and the peaceful reign of our Redeemer extend through earth and sea.

“ With sentiments of respect, &c.

Z. G.”

‘ How very pretty,’ said Emily.

The next letter Mrs. Stanwood read was from a clergyman in England, to a friend. It was written thus.

‘ The interest you have ever manifested in the successful circulation of Tracts, induces me to relate an interesting incident of that nature, which occurred beneath my personal observation. One Sabbath evening, a few years since, I was returning from Tickhill to Rotherham, having preached at the former place. After crossing a small stream, about a mile to the westward of Tickhill, I saw a man at some distance before me, standing in an angle of the road at the skirt of the wood. It is a very solitary place, and not knowing what his intention might be in standing there, I quickened my pace, and soon passed him. In a few seconds, I heard him following close behind me, and as

I hastened, he did the same till he overtook me. Do you come from Rotherham? was his first inquiry. I replied, yes. Are you a student? Yes. Did you come through our town last week? No, but one of our students did. Yes, he replied, and he gave away many little books in the street, and one to my daughter, called the "Swearer's Prayer." I read it at night after I had done my work, and it terrified me very much. I wondered God had not sent me to hell long ago, for swearing. I have been very uneasy in my mind ever since. I thought some of you might pass this way to-day, and I have come to meet you. I want you should tell me what I must do to be saved. He appeared very much agitated and in earnest, while asking this important question, and had come to meet me about six miles. I stated to him, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, even to seek and to save that which was lost, and that he is the end of the law for righteousness to all that believe. He asked me a variety of questions, which showed his anxiety to be right, and his fears lest he should be wrong. While I attempted to convince him that Jesus is *able* to save, and that his mercy is sufficient to

save the worst of characters, he burst into tears, praying fervently that God would have mercy on him; he lamented much his ignorance and profaneness, frequently expressing his doubts whether he should obtain salvation. And indeed, he urged his fears so frequently and forcibly, that I wept with him—at length his grief subsided, he seemed encouraged, and before we parted, he repeatedly declared his desire to live a new life, if the Lord should spare him.

‘At parting he expressed his thankfulness with tears for the instruction he had received, and hoped he might be enabled to repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. I trust he became one of the many instances of brands snatched from the burning, by the instrumentality of the Swearer’s Prayer.

‘Yours, &c.

J. S.’

‘How strange it is,’ said Emily, ‘when we have so many convincing proofs like this, that people should still doubt the utility of Tracts.’

*Mother.* ‘Yes; but with the patrons of this Society the many striking testimonies to their usefulness they were daily receiving, were evi-

dences so satisfactory that God blessed their efforts, they could not but engage each year with renewed strength and activity; though perhaps on earth they will never know the *extent* of their utility, they will find endless cause no doubt in glory, to rejoice in their labors of love.

‘I am happy to say, in 1824, their receipts were more than in any previous year.’

*Charles*, (eagerly.) ‘What were they, mother?’

*Mother*. ‘Eight thousand three hundred and nine dollars and eighty seven cents. The number of Tracts issued was proportionably large, 770,000, I think. Twenty eight new Depositories were established, (fourteen of which were west of the Alleghany.) The Tracts were issued in quite an improved dress; their edges were trimmed, and the quality of their paper was improved. Many of them were ornamented with cuts, and they began to use stereotype plates.

‘In June, the American Tract Magazine was first published.’

*Charles*, (aside to his cousin Helen, in quite a consequential tone.) ‘I take that publication.’

*Henry*. ‘You mean uncle Merton takes it for you, because your name is Charles, and you were named for him.’

*Susan.* 'I wish I was named for somebody, then I should have a present once a year, at least, which I don't get now. Cousin, does your aunt Helen ever give you any thing for your name? I wonder why I was not named for any body; the rest were.'

*William*, (roguishly.) 'Because you were such a homely baby, Susan, nobody would own you as a namesake.'

The children laughed.

There followed a pause full five minutes long—all were looking at their mother, but she was busy with her needle, and entirely silent. Charles at length said, 'Mother, are you not going to tell us any more?'

*Mother.* 'You seem so interested in your own conversation, perhaps you have no inclination to hear any thing farther about the Tract Society.'

'Oh yes, mother,' said the younger ones—'please to go on, we will not interrupt you so rudely again.'

Mrs. Stanwood then said, 'The Society had long felt the want of such a periodical to announce to donors the receipt of their charities,

to contain lists of new Depositories and of new Tracts ; to convey information of the wants of our own country, and other parts of the world ; to communicate whatever might be interesting in the correspondence of the Society, and particularly to relate instances of the utility of Tracts as they came to their knowledge, and to awaken a deeper interest in Christians in the cause of benevolence.

Many urgent calls for Tracts to distribute gratuitously were made this year, and supplies, in many instances, were granted, though not to the extent desired, for want of means.'

*William.* ' I am rejoiced to hear they established fourteen Depositories west of the Alleghany.'

*Mother.* ' Yes ; a deeper interest began to be felt in our western States, and more vigorous exertions were made to supply their moral wants.

' I could tell you many interesting instances of hopeful conversion by means of these little messengers of righteousness, communicated this year. An abandoned pedlar was reformed and converted by reading the " Swearer's Prayer," given him by a pious sick woman. A young



girl died, rejoicing in Christ, whose first impressions were made by reading a Tract.\*

‘A poor man, reduced to despair by his own profligacy, and determined to rush unbidden into eternity, had entered a barber’s shop, intending to use one of the razors for his horrid purpose—he was led to abandon the resolution by reading the “Swearer’s Prayer,” a Broad Sheet, which had been left there to be affixed to the wall. He was led to repentance, and eventually to sit at the feet of his Saviour in his right mind.’†

*William.* ‘How much good Tracts have done.’

*Mother.* ‘Yes; and the Society longed to see its sphere of benevolence extended, and unshackled by such limited means and boundaries to spread its beneficial effects throughout our country, through destitute moral wastes in other lands, and over the isles of the sea. But how could they grasp so much? It was a small body, though rapidly and wonderfully increasing, yet possessing resources utterly inadequate at present for such a vast design. But the com-

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\* 1 Vol. American Tract Magazine, p. 44.

† 1 Vol. American Tract Magazine, p. 64.

mencement of the twelfth year of its existence, (1825,) seemed to promise the fulfilment of such a wish.'

*Susan.* 'Why, what new thing happened?'

*Helen.* 'Some benevolent soul left a great legacy, I suppose.'

*Mother.* 'Five religious denominations of Christians united in a National Society, called the American Tract Society, instituted at New York; and, by this union of strength and means, laid the basis of far more extended and efficient effort than either could have sustained alone.'

*William.* 'What denominations were they?'

*Mother.* 'Baptists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Reformed Dutch, and Congregationalists.'

*Emily.* 'But I should have feared, with such a diversity of feeling as these different denominations possess, that there would have been danger of collision, especially in the publishing of their Tracts.'

*Mother.* 'They successfully guarded against that. The object of the Society was declared to be "the diffusion of a knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, as the Redeemer of sinners, and the promotion of the interests of vital godliness and morality." All of course were cordially united in that—and'

*Emily.* ‘They might all perfectly agree in the *object*, and yet entirely differ in the mode of effecting it.’

*Mother.* ‘True; but I was going to add—The doctrines in which they all agree were made to constitute the basis of their union; viz. “man’s native sinfulness—the purity and obligation of the law of God—the true and proper divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ—the necessity and reality of his atonement and sacrifice—the efficiency of the Holy Spirit in the work of renovation—the free and full offers of the gospel, and the duty of men to accept it—the necessity of personal holiness—and an everlasting state of rewards and punishments beyond the grave.”

‘A Publishing Committee, consisting of five, one from each of the several denominations, was chosen to examine all the Tracts, which should be issued from their press, that nothing objectionable to either might be circulated.’

*William.* ‘Why was the Society located at New York?’

*Mother.* ‘Because there is no city in the country, that possesses such facilities as New York, from its local situation, for holding direct

and easy communication with all parts of our own land and other countries.'

*Susan.* 'What became of the Boston Society's Agent?'

*Mother.* 'He was chosen as Corresponding Secretary of the American Tract Society at New York, and another gentleman was selected to supply his place at Boston.'

*William.* 'Did the Tract Society of Boston continue to print Tracts for its own use and the supply of its auxiliaries?'

*Mother.* 'The business of publishing was transferred to the Society at New York. They adopted the series of the American Tract Society, Boston, as the basis of theirs, with a few alterations, and supplied other societies at a very low rate. The Boston Society still retained its distinct organization, constitution, members, funds, officers and auxiliaries.

'Its report of 1825 states, that \$10,802 43 were received; twenty two new Depositories were established, and 928,500 Tracts were printed. In 1826, \$10,158 78 were received, and in 1827, its receipts were \$30,413 01.'

*William.* 'More than \$30,000! Oh, I un-

derstand ; you mean the receipts of the National Society.'

*Emily.* 'The Boston Society is now only a branch ; so you will confine your future history to the National one, shall you not ?'

*Mother.* 'Yes ; but look at the vast field of influence opened *now* before you. The American Tract Society at Boston, in which you have all felt so deeply interested, and whose efforts and results have excited so much admiration and delight, is now—'

*Helen.* 'Swallowed up ! devoured like Pharaoh's full ears !'

*Mrs. Stanwood.* (smiling.) 'No ; it is (in all its extent) but one of six hundred and thirty other streams, widening and extending, each fertilizing as it goes, till they all meet in one vast river, pure and clear, like "the river of water of life," bearing all manner of fruits, as in all the little anecdotes I have told you ; and is now beginning to yield her fruit every month, as I am about to tell you in the "Monthly Distribution of Tracts—"'

The door-bell at this moment rung loudly, and the long expected uncle Merton was an-

nounced. The children told him they had been waiting more than an hour—while Mrs. Stanwood affirmed, that Henry's heart had beat faster at every footstep since tea.

All were soon seated, and Col. Merton directed some remarks to their mother, and a few questions to each of the children—but the time they occupied, seemed longer to the little ones than all the painful moments they had spent before. Charles at length ventured to inquire, 'How soon he would begin about Tracts?'

Uncle Merton said, he was glad to find Charles felt time was so precious, and was for having things despatched, but he really felt it was necessary, as it seemed so much would be required of him, to lay in a comfortable stock of breath for the occasion—and he must wait a few moments. 'You forget, my little fellow,' said he, taking his hand affectionately, 'that I have walked two miles.'

Charles smiled, and sat down and tried to look like 'patience on a monument.' He remained very still about five minutes, and then thinking, I suppose, that uncle Merton had breath enough by this time, remarked, 'You said, uncle, just as you were going away the

other evening, you wished you had time to tell us about the valley of the Mississippi. Shall you tell us about that to-night ?

*Uncle.* ‘ Yes, my boy, if you wish it, I will confine myself to that—or I will tell you about the Monthly Distribution of Tracts, a plan which has been lately adopted to supply every family with these useful little preachers, or I can amuse you with interesting anecdotes which I have heard at home and abroad.’

*Henry.* ‘ I wish you could tell about them all.’

Emily said, smiling, ‘ If the children should keep him to his promise, “ that he would tell all he knew,” she feared he would find it an overwhelming requisition.’

*Henry.* ‘ Will you please to tell, uncle, where the Valley of the Mississippi is ?’

*Uncle.* ‘ It is the tract of country, extending from the Alleghany to the Rocky mountains, and from the gulf of Mexico to the Northern lakes.’

*Charles.* ‘ Will you please to show it to us on the map ?’

Henry ran for the atlas, and uncle Merton

traced with his pencil on the map of the United States, the vast Valley of the Mississippi.

‘But uncle,’ said Charles, ‘I suppose there are not a *very great* number of people in that region, especially west of the Mississippi; there are few but Indians.’

*Uncle.* ‘You are not right there, Charles. In 1790, forty years ago, the actual civilized population within these boundaries was but little less than 150,000; now they have increased till they number more than 4,000,000, and according to the best calculations, in twenty years from this, they will amount to nearly 12,000,000.’

*Susan and Charles.* ‘Twelve millions!!’

‘That is almost as many,’ said Emily, ‘as all the present population of our country.’

*Uncle.* ‘Yes; and this vast region, as a whole, is but partially supplied with religious institutions, and infidelity and vice in many places prevail.’

*William.* ‘Mother read a letter to us just before you came, containing an account of the immorality and vice of the city of New Orleans, and how sadly the Sabbath is profaned there.’

*Uncle.* ‘That place is but a sample of many



others in that region of country. There is a large portion of the western community, who are reached by no other means of grace, and who *can* be by Tracts; multitudes there are, who never entered the sanctuary, are visited by no preacher of the gospel, have not the Bible, and come under the influence of no school of any kind whatever.'

*William.* 'If these facts are true, and Christians know them, why is not something done to better their state?'

*Uncle.* 'Efforts are now making to supply them with Tracts, and to establish Depositories in various places.'

*Charles.* 'I know what I would do, and I think it would be a better plan than to send Tracts. I would supply every family with the Bible.'

*Henry.* (his eyes sparkling, as if he had a very bright thought forthcoming,) 'I would send *ministers* enough for them all.'

*Uncle.* 'Your plans are very good, and Charles will probably see his executed before the close of 1830. The American Bible Society has passed a resolution to supply every family in the United States with a Bible by that

time. But where will you, Henry, find ministers enough and to spare, ready and waiting to wing their way west, and settle in that great Valley. You must remember we have scarcely enough, even with those now preparing for the ministry, to supply New England, granting one to every 2000 people.'

*Charles.* 'How many ministers, at that rate, would be necessary to furnish the Valley of the Mississippi?'

*Uncle.* 'Two thousand;—but how soon that number might be raised, if boys like you would but Remember their Creator in their youth—give their hearts to the Saviour, and their time and talents to his cause among the destitute. *Think* of it, boys—Oh! how it would gladden your uncle's heart to see you all coming up to the help of the Lord, with all your youth and activity, and with holy hearts burning for the honor of the Lord of Hosts.'

Uncle Merton paused, and seemed for a moment absorbed in his own reflections. 'Yes,' said he, breaking the silence and apparently talking to himself—'tis a vast field—very destitute—something must be done.' Then turning to Mrs. Stanwood, he said with much feel-

ing, 'It has been ascertained as a fact, by actual investigation, that in many sections of the State of Alabama, whose population has increased since 1816 from 30,000 to 300,000, one half or two-thirds of the inhabitants are wholly destitute of the Bible.'

*Emily.* 'But are there no Christians in that region, whose efforts might supply the destitute, and effect a moral change in the people?'

*Uncle.* 'Yes, a few, and they possess choice spirits, and an ardent desire to do good; but they are a feeble band—small in numbers, and destitute in a great measure of the means to accomplish their wishes, yet they do what they are able. I have an intimate friend, who resides far beyond the Mississippi river, from whom I receive frequent communications; so I know correctly the efforts Christians there are making, the desolate state of the country, and the earnest solicitude with which they look for encouragement and help from the north. In one letter I received from this gentleman, he says, (after relating the feeble efforts he, in connexion with a few other private Christians, had been able to make, with their results,) "But what are these to their necessities? In my seclusion here in

these western wilds, my heart at times is ready to sink within me at the slowness of evangelical movements towards poor, neglected, unknown Arkansas."

'A correspondent in Ohio, says with much earnestness in one of his letters, "Do have a prayer-meeting for this country; I could sit down and weep over these moral desolations, if it would do any good. There is a great destitution of the means of grace, and intemperance, profaneness, Sabbath-breaking, and other vices prevail to a lamentable extent."

'It is *time*, Mrs. Stanwood,' said Col. Merton, turning to his sister, 'it is time something should be *done* at the West. It is astonishing, Christians sit here so listless and inattentive to the future destiny of our country. Do but think of the unparalleled increase of population, and the efforts of the Catholics among them. I have received several letters within two years from Maj. Langdon, an old college friend, now at the West; and they contain statements, that would rouse Christendom, if they had any love for souls.'

'I'll tell you what, sister,' said the Colonel, as he brushed away the clinging little ones, and

rose in all the energy and dignity of a benevolent soul, and paced the room with a decided, firm step—‘my mind has become settled as to future duty since I saw you; I have been wavering six months, but it is over—I’ve no wife or children, and the Lord has given me a noble stewardship, so I can do it.’

‘Do *what*, brother?’ said Mrs. Stanwood, smiling.

‘Get *married*?’ inquired the arch Helen, laughing.

‘I intend,’ said the Colonel, (so absorbed in his own firm purpose as not to notice Helen’s inquiry, or the host of dimples on the young faces around him, awakened by the thought of uncle Merton’s getting married,) ‘I intend to dedicate myself, my time, and property to the promotion of the cause of Christ in the vast Valley of the Mississippi.’

*Henry* ‘You are not a minister—you cannot *preach*, uncle, can you?’

Uncle Merton smiled at Henry’s question, and said, ‘No, Henry, I shall not *preach*, but I shall spend my time in establishing Sabbath schools, and in distributing Tracts.’

*Mrs. Stanwood.* ‘ I know of no way in which you might be more useful, brother, or any field of labor so wide and destitute. But what led you to your present determination ?’

*Col. Merton.* ‘ I have felt for two years a peculiar interest in the state and wants of the West ; it has increased as my knowledge of its moral situation has extended, and the uninterrupted intercourse by letter, which I have maintained with two or three old friends there, has cherished this interest—but the last letter I have received from Maj. Langdon has been more intimately connected with my decision, perhaps, than any thing else. I have felt, since perusing the statements he has made, something must be done *now* for perishing souls—and if *others* will not go forward in this work, why, *I* must.’

*Mrs. Stanwood.* ‘ What statements were those ?’

*Col. Merton.* ‘ Relative to Popery—the Catholics are gaining ground, and “ the man of sin,” dominion. If I have that letter with me,’ (taking out his pocket-book,) ‘ I will read it ;’ (searches carefully,)—‘ Yes, here it is.’ All eyes were fixed on Col. Merton, as he opened a

letter, written closely in quite a small hand. He began :

‘ *My dear Merton,*

‘ The affectionate interest you expressed in our desolate state, considered in a moral view, and your wish for a more minute and connected statement of foreign plans and movements here, have induced me to sit down with the intention of writing a long letter. Oh ! that you were here, and I could pour out my whole soul to you in a personal interview. Will you not pray for this dark Valley, and waken our brethren at the North, that they may use means to rescue these perishing millions from eternal wo !

‘ It is now, you know, several years since I first pitched my tent in this delightful, yet spiritually desolate and lone valley. It was thinly peopled, and a dark place—yet, dark as it was, Merton, the darkness is more fearful now. I have watched with astonishment and solemnity the almost magic rising of this vast population, and I have mourned their want of shepherds and their want of spiritual light. Many have risen into being, and laid down in their long, last sleep, without one glance upon the sacred

page. I have rejoiced truly at what my countrymen have done to enlighten other nations, and dispel a blacker darkness; but I have mourned, that they have forgotten these, who are 'bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh.' I trust they are waking now; they *may* redeem the time, and this land may soon become Emmanuel's land. Do you ask what has been *done*? I will tell you first what, with the Lord's help, must be *undone*. While Christians have been sitting beneath the shade of their own vine and fig-tree in comparative indolence, the enemy has been busy, sowing tares. "Louisiana is even now almost entirely under Catholic influence. The Pope has planted his standard in the very heart of the other States. His resources are great, his projects vast, and his vigilance corresponding to the greatness of his undertaking, which seems to be nothing less than a powerful and resistless effort to break through every obstacle, and extend the dominion of Babylon from the Euphrates to the fair banks of the Mississippi. The past year he sent over twenty-five missionaries from Europe with \$100,000. These missionaries are abroad in all directions,



zealously propagating their sentiments, establishing schools and colleges, convents and nunneries, and they labor with an energy and ardor, which would well become a better cause." A large part of the people, destitute of the Bible, of a preached gospel, and abounding in infidelity and vice, are in a state of preparation to be led away 'by every wind of doctrine,' and to 'follow cunningly devised fables.'

'All Catholic countries are watching the progress of Popery here, and stand ready with men and means to assist their cause efficiently. "I have been told, nothing excites more general interest, or is the subject of more frequent and interesting conversation in Italy, than the enterprise of converting our Western States to the 'Faith of the Church of Rome.'"

I had access, a few weeks since, to a few numbers of a periodical published in France, and entitled 'Annals of the Association for the Propagation of the Faith.' They contain extracts from several letters to that Association; I will transcribe a few, disclosing the plans and wishes of the Catholics. The letters were written by M. Flaget, Bishop of Bardstown."

*Charles.* ‘Bardstown! uncle, will you please to tell where that is?’

*Uncle.* ‘In the State of Kentucky. In the four States of Kentucky, Indiana, Tennessee and Illinois, which constitute the diocese of Bardstown, are stationed twenty-one Catholic missionaries, besides two Bishops.’

*William.* ‘Twenty-one Catholic missionaries!’

*Uncle.* ‘Yes; and that diocese contains thirty churches, a Dominican convent, and two nunneries. Its whole population amounts to 1,397,450 souls, 30,000 of whom are Catholics.’

*Emily.* ‘You quite astonish me, uncle.’

*William.* ‘I thought there were very few Catholics in this country.’

*Uncle.* ‘Oh yes, there are many; even in Boston, and the vicinity, where forty years ago there were but 160, they calculate their number at 7000—and it is estimated there are now 600,000 Catholics in the United States.’

*Mrs. Stanwood.* ‘Their increase is astonishing, and certainly their unwearied efforts ought to shame our inactivity. But do continue your letter, if you please, brother.’

Col. Merton reads. ‘Bishop Flaget says, speaking of the influence of schools, and the number of Protestant pupils they induce to embrace Popery—“Had I treasures at my disposal, I would multiply colleges, and schools for boys and girls; I would build hospitals and public houses—in a word, I would compel my Kentuckians to admire and love a religion so beneficent and generous, *and perhaps I should finish by converting them.*”

‘He says of the progress of Popery—“Since the holy Catholic religion has exhibited herself in Kentucky with a certain splendor—since schools for girls and boys, into which all sects are admitted, have been multiplied, our many churches built, and our doctrine clearly and solidly explained in them on Sundays and festivals, the most happy revolution is effected. To the most inveterate prejudices have succeeded astonishment, admiration, and the desire of knowing our principles. Now the conversions are numerous. In twelve jubilees, wherein I have presided, more than forty Protestants have entered the church; a great number still are preparing to share the same happiness—and I have hardly gone over the half of Kentucky.”

‘ Speaking of the Indians, he says—“ Many nations of these poor barbarians inhabit the borders of Indiana and Illinois, *two States depending still on my jurisdiction* ;” he adds, “ the repugnance of these savages to civilization, the degeneracy and brutishness of their powers of mind, their implacable hatred and revenge, their constant and disgusting drunkenness, their insurmountable indolence, their roving and vagabond life, all these, united with their continual traffic with the whites, which cannot be hindered *as long as the republican government shall subsist*, render our labors among them almost fruitless.” ’

‘ Ah !’ said William, (his eyes flashing,) ‘ *as long as the Republican Government shall subsist ! !* ’

*Emily.* ‘ And will Christians sit still, while Rome is already beginning to calculate on its termination ? What will be done ? ’

*Uncle.* ‘ I can tell you, Emily, what *must* be done to save our country from the darkness and tyranny of Popery, but I cannot tell you what *will* be. If Christians do not arouse, and pray and labor ; if they sleep but a few years more,

through eternity they will mourn their sluggishness—but it will be too late to do it effectually in time.

‘ To avert this threatening evil, we must first go to the great Head of the Church in prayer—we must remember from whom we have received our earthly treasures, and open our purses wide to aid the cause of Christ. Liberal patronage must be extended to Home Missionary, Bible, and Tract Societies. More agents to distribute Tracts and establish Sabbath schools must be sent out immediately, and Bibles and Missionaries speedily follow. The American Sunday School Union is now making vigorous efforts to establish Sabbath schools at the West. It is a blessed effort, and deserves our warmest support. It is an acknowledged fact, that “our nation has no preservative against Popery except in the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures.” ’

*Charles.* ‘ Do Catholics have no Bibles ? ’

*Uncle.* ‘ The Catholic church does not allow the circulation of the pure word of God ; the priests say, it is dangerous to place it in the hands of the common people without some one to guide them to a right understanding of it.

'They say too, it is a book of mysteries, capable of being understood and interpreted only by the priests.'

*William.* 'The apostles did not think so ; I remember it is said in Acts xvii. 11, the Bereans were more noble than the Christians of Thessalonica, because they "searched the scriptures daily," to see for themselves whether the things the apostles told them were so. The apostles thought the people were capable of judging for themselves.'

*Susan.* 'And I remember Jesus Christ himself says, John v. 39, "Search the scriptures."'

*Charles.* 'What else do they believe, uncle?'

*Uncle.* 'That their priests have power to forgive sins.'

"Who can forgive sins but God only," said William in a low tone.

*Uncle.* 'They believe in purgatory, a state after death, where souls suffer for a time on account of their sins. They worship images.'

*William.* 'But the second commandment says, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water that is under the earth ;

Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them, for—''

*Uncle.* 'Yes; but the Roman Catholic church have expunged the second commandment from their Bibles, and to make out the ten, they divide the tenth into two. They forbid their priests to marry, and teach many other things which the Bible does not authorize.'

*Emily.* 'But, uncle, Christians in this part of the country are now making considerable efforts for the Valley of the Mississippi, are they not?'

*Uncle.* 'Yes; and I cannot but hope much will be accomplished—but I have not yet finished reading the letter to you. I will read what the Bishop himself says about our labors there, and the encouraging field for effort which the Valley presents.' (reads.)

'“The superabundant population of ancient Europe is flowing towards the United States. Each one arrives, not with his religion, but with his indifference. The greater part are disposed to embrace the doctrine, whatever it be, which is first preached to them. America may one day become the centre of civilization. *If the Protestant sects are beforehand with us, it will be difficult to destroy their influence.*”

‘Then the editor of this French paper adds, “Bishop Fenwick, (Cincinnati,) is laboring with an admirable zeal to combat this influence of the Protestant sects in the mission intrusted to him. Numerous conversions have already crowned his efforts; and he has even been able to establish a convent, all the nuns of which are Protestants, who have abjured their former faith.”’

‘That is nearly all,’ said Col. Merton, closing the letter, ‘which relates to this subject, except a few remarks expressive of his earnest desire, that Christians would become more interested in their wants. My friend states, as his opinion, that no plan is so well calculated to benefit them, as the circulation of Tracts; they would be more read, and perhaps meet with fewer obstacles at present than the Bible.’

*Mrs. Stanwood.* ‘I rejoice that the Tract Society is beginning to act as efficiently as it is.’

*Uncle.* ‘Yes; they are now employing eight agents, I believe, in different portions of the Valley, with instructions to distribute Tracts to every family, which is willing to receive them. Rev. Ornan Eastman, the general agent, left New York for the field assigned him on the 19th of November, 1828. From him and his



associates, many interesting and encouraging communications have been received. They state, that the field is already white to the harvest; that laborers and means to prosecute their mission are only wanting to effect a wonderful moral change there.'

*Charles.* 'Why do they not send out more agents?'

*Uncle.* 'They will, as soon as Christians make larger appropriations of money for efforts at the West. Only \$691 36 were received in donations expressly for the Valley of the Mississippi, during 1829. How much of that, Emily, do you suppose was given the last *quarter* of 1829?'

*Emily.* 'I cannot tell; \$200, perhaps.'

*William.* 'Oh no, I presume it was more than that.'

*Uncle.* 'It was—' he hesitated; all eyes were fixed upon him—but every lash fell, when he said, 'thirty-one dollars!!!'

Even Helen expressed her surprise at the smallness of the sum.

'Remember,' said Col. Merton, 'I was speaking only of that, given expressly for the Valley of the Mississippi. The receipts of the National

Society, during the years 1828 and 1829, were gratifying and encouraging.' Henry's feelings, throughout the whole, had been deeply interested in the expected results of 1829, and his hopes were very high. He drew near uncle Merton, rested his arm upon his shoulder, and bent forward in breathless anxiety to hear.

*Uncle.* 'In 1828, \$45,134 58 were received into their treasury, and in 1829, their receipts were \$60,153 98.

'In the former year, 5,019,000 Tracts were printed; in the latter, 6,268,000.'

'How they increase,' said William, joyfully.

'Uncle Merton,' said Helen, 'you remarked a few moments since, that instructions were given to the agents employed at the West, to supply every family with Tracts; why is it not done here?'

*Uncle.* 'The same plan is now in operation here. The New York Tract Society were led to adopt it at first for the West, as being the most practicable system of effort there; and while they were "praying, laboring and giving, that Tracts might be sent to every destitute family in the Valley of the Mississippi, they were led to ask, 'Are there not multitudes of

families in these older States, and even in our own city, who neglect all the means of gospel grace, and whom it is as truly our duty to supply with Tracts, as any in the Valley of the West?' The subject came up for consideration before the Board of the New York City Tract Society—the obligation was felt—the duty was clear—and the system of giving one Tract monthly to every family, willing to receive it, that none might be passed by, was commenced without delay in that city, and has been vigorously prosecuted till this time.''

*William.* 'Then the "Monthly Distribution of Tracts" was first commenced in New York.'

*Uncle.* 'Yes; with very encouraging results.'

*Mrs. Stanwood.* 'I rejoice to learn from recent periodicals, that it is becoming so extensively adopted.'

*Col. Merton.* 'Yes; many cities and towns in New York State have commenced it, and some of the largest cities in Pennsylvania likewise. It has been adopted in Alexandria, D. C. and in the large towns and cities of New Jersey, Virginia, Georgia, Mississippi, Kentucky, Tennessee, New Hampshire, Connecticut, Massachusetts and Maine.'

‘About a million and a half of the inhabitants of the United States, I suppose are now receiving Tracts on this plan.’

*Helen.* ‘How long since it was first adopted in New York city?’

*Uncle.* ‘It was commenced in March, 1829.’

*Helen.* ‘I do not know as I understand the plan exactly.’

*Uncle.* ‘Well, I suspect I can explain it to you; and perhaps awaken your interest in it so deeply, that in less than three months, we shall see you among the most active and efficient distributors, for I strongly hope it will be commenced in this village soon.’

Helen smiled. ‘I cannot tell,’ said she, ‘what I *shall* do next. I should not have believed one year since, that Helen Sumner would have been engaged in carrying about parcels of Tracts to distribute among her poor neighbors; but she has done even so. I believe I will risk hearing the plan, however, come what will.’

*Emily.* ‘How courageous you are, for a free-agent.’

*Uncle.* ‘I believe I can give you quite a minute description of the method adopted in New York, for I have taken no small pains to

gain information on the subject myself. I became deeply interested in it, while there last summer, and accompanied several distributors in their visits with no small pleasure and profit. In the first place, a City Committee was chosen, consisting of one individual for each of the fourteen wards, each individual becoming solely responsible for the thorough occupancy of the ward, assigned him. By them the city was explored and divided into about five hundred districts, to each of which a distributor was appointed, and a map of the district and a card, explaining the plan, and containing instructions as to the best mode of procedure in the distribution of Tracts, were placed in his hands.

‘I believe I have one of the cards in my pocket’—(searches and finds one)—‘yes; this will give you an insight into the whole matter.’ (hands it to Helen.)

The children all jumped and ran to see.

‘Sit down, children,’ said Mrs. Stanwood, ‘and your cousin Helen will read aloud, perhaps.’

Helen examines the card; finds on one side the following, and reads:

## GENERAL DISTRIBUTION OF TRACTS.

EVERY week brings new evidence of the usefulness of Religious Tracts. They are *short*, and will be read when a larger book would be laid aside; they are *unassuming*, and gain admittance where other means are excluded; they are *interesting*, and adapted to all circumstances and conditions in life; and their object is to *make known to guilty men the way of salvation through a crucified Redeemer*.

The New York City Tract Society, assured that many tens of thousands of our city population rarely, if ever, enter the house of God; or are addressed by any one on the subject of their personal salvation; or receive the message of the gospel in any form whatever; feel, that there devolves on Christians of this city a sacred and imperious obligation immediately to supply the whole population of the city with Tracts; and to do it so thoroughly, that no family, however obscure, shall fail of having some portion of the truths of the gospel offered to them in this attractive and unobtrusive form.

For this object, a City Committee has been appointed, consisting of one member for each Ward, whose duty it is to obtain the co-operation of Christians in carrying this arduous and useful design into systematic and thorough execution.

By this Committee the whole city has been divided into small Districts, each of which is assigned to an active individual, who agrees, if the providence of God permit, to present a Tract, during the first fifteen days of every month, to every family which is willing to receive them.

On the other side of this card will be found hints for the direction of a Distributor in a specified District. (*See opposite page.*)

CITY COMMITTEE, March, 1829.  
Ward 1. Lewis Tappan, 122 Pearl, or 25 Greenwich.

- " 2. Jesse Talbot, 144 Nassau.
- " 3. J. D. Holbrook, 44 Lumber.
- " 4. D. M'Arthur, 15 Whitehall.
- " 5. Arthur Tappan, 20 Beach.
- " 6. William W. Chester, 70 White.
- " 7. James B. Brinsmade, 63 Rutgers.

Ward 8. Moses Allen, 113 Hudson.

- " 9. Knowles Taylor, 20 Bond.
- " 10. E. Platt, Jr. 295 Broome.
- " 11. Moses H. Wilder, 229 Sullivan.
- " 12. C. Starr, 115 Nassau, or c. 4th Ave. & 40th St.
- " 13. Silas Woodbury, 208 Stanton.
- " 14. W. A. Hallock, 130 Greene, or 144 Nassau.

## HINTS TO A DISTRIBUTOR OF TRACTS IN A SPECIFIED DISTRICT.

*To do good, and to communicate, forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.* Heb. xiii. 16.

1. Begin your work in your closet—feel the value of the immortal souls whom Providence has placed within the District assigned you, whether old or young, rich or poor, and pray God to bless your endeavors for their spiritual good. The tendency of this will be to render your work pleasant, your deportment kind and affectionate, and to give you an easy access to all.
2. Within the first fifteen days of every month, present one copy of the Tract, or Tracts, which shall be furnished you by the City Committee, to each family in your District that is willing to receive them; not omitting those who are most obscure, and furthest removed from the public eye.—It is believed this distribution may properly be made, either on a week day, or on the Sabbath.
3. Read every Tract before distributing it, that you may know its value, and be able to speak intelligently of its character and contents.
4. Should you find families who wish for Tracts in French, Spanish, or German, such can be obtained through the Committee for the Ward.
5. Endeavor, as far as practicable, to ascertain the spiritual wants of every family in your District; and omit no opportunity of personal religious conversation, or of aiding the cause of the bible, or of Sabbath schools, or of inducing all to attend steadily on the public worship of God.
6. *Ladies* may most successfully engage in supplying a District with Tracts. Should they find any portion of their District inaccessible, they will obtain the aid of some gentleman in supplying it, or report the same to the Committee for the Ward.

7. When practicable, obtain the company of some pious friend in your distributions.

8. On or before the 15th day of each month, fill the blanks on the accompanying paper, as your report of your distribution for the month, and send the same, without delay, to Mr.

No.

Street, Committee for the

Ward,  
from whom Tracts will be obtained for the stated supply of your District.

It has been found very important in these distributions, for the distributor, personally, to see the head of every family, that the object may be fully explained and understood; and the distributions are made in accordance with the grand principle of the gospel, that its message is to be offered to all, while the responsibility of voluntarily accepting or rejecting it, rests on every individual to whom it is conveyed.

### DISTRIBUTOR'S REPORT.

*For District No.    Ward No.    For the month of    18*

Whole number of families in the District . . . .

Number of Tracts distributed during the first 15 days  
of the present month, . . . . .

Number of families in which Tracts were refused, .

(The Distributor will here add, in writing, a notice of such circumstances as have occurred in his distributions, and are calculated to show the usefulness of Tracts, or to encourage the friends of the Tract cause.)

*Helen.* ‘Oh yes, I understand it fully now; but you know I always see lions in the way—perhaps these are *chained* though—but I should think it a plan, surrounded with vast obstacles to its accomplishment.’

*Uncle.* ‘I know to what you allude—the difficulty of obtaining access to all families, the opposition roused, and the ill treatment of the distributors. Many feared to engage with such prospects before them; but I can assure you the results have been such as to fill Christians



with gratitude, and afford them great encouragement.'

*Helen.* 'But did no families refuse to receive them, and were the distributors always treated properly and politely?'

*Uncle.* 'I believe, on an average, they have been refused in one family, out of sixty; some cases have occurred where the distributors have been treated rudely, but *very few*. During the eleven months, in which this plan has been in operation, nearly 370,000 Tracts have been distributed in this way.'

*Emily.* 'At the rate of more than one thousand a day. Astonishing! What good must be effected in a short time by this simple method.'

*Uncle.* 'True; and you might have exclaimed, how much has been already done! Many souls even now refer to these Tracts as the instruments of their conversion.'

'A large number of families, which at first refused, now receive them willingly, and read them with deep interest.'

*Helen.* 'But, uncle, do you suppose my father would receive a Tract, offered him by a monthly distributor?'

*Uncle.* 'If his family was the only one in

the town to whom it was offered, or a particular Tract was selected purposely, and presented to him, it is probable he would decidedly refuse it. But if he was only one among two hundred families, and the same Tract was offered to all at the same time, that it was to him, he would receive it, I doubt not, with his characteristic politeness.'

*Mrs. Stanwood.* 'If you would read the numbers of the American Tract Magazine for the last year, Helen, you would find the reports from the monthly distributors exceedingly interesting.'

*Charles.* 'I'll lend you mine to read, cousin.'

*Uncle.* 'Beside the number of conversions through the instrumentality of the Tracts, distributed monthly in New York, many intemperate persons have been reformed, more than six hundred children have been brought into Sabbath schools, and 1,400 families, destitute of the Word of God, have been reported and supplied.'

"A clergyman, in a town of six hundred families, told me, that the placing of the Tract, entitled "The Sanctuary," in every family, was followed by an immediate increase in his audi-

ence on the Sabbath, of not far from one hundred hearers."

*"This plan is the most practicable method of speedily executing the command of our Saviour, 'Preach the gospel to every creature.'—*The enterprise has at once created in the city of New York a band of five hundred domestic missionaries, who, without encroaching upon the rights or duties of the ministry, are carrying some portion of the gospel every month to every family within their limits. It enables five hundred active and warm-hearted Christians to deliver the message of their master twelve times every year, under the most favorable circumstances, to the entire population.

"Now if no other results were to follow this great enterprise," said one of the distributors to me, "than the discipline it will give the distributors themselves, inspiring devotional habits and feelings, government of temper, humility, patience, perseverance, and Christian boldness, the work would be worthy of perpetuity.

"Four persons, who are now distributors in the Ninth Ward, have been hopefully converted since the plan of monthly distribution commenced; one of whom was led to attend to his

immortal interests in consequence of reading the Tract, 'Quench not the Spirit;' and another, no longer ago than last March, was attached to the infidel society of Free Enquirers.

"A man in the Eleventh Ward stated, that the Tract distributed in July, entitled, 'Quench not the Spirit,' first led him to think seriously on the subject of religion, and that he valued it so highly that he had since carried it in his pocket, that he might often peruse it.

"One of the distributors of the Twelfth Ward states, that he has reason to bless God for the day when he became a Tract distributor; for his wife, who had recently died of consumption, during her last sickness had read many of the Tracts which were left with him for distribution, and was thus brought to see her lost condition, and finally to experience joy and peace in believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. Three weeks after this happy change, her spirit took its flight to the eternal world.

"The captain of a North-River sloop informed me, that a Tract on Intemperance was given last spring to one of his neighbors, who a few years since was the most influential man in the village, but who had become a drunkard and an

out-cast from society, and that the perusal of the Tract produced such an impression on his mind, that he not only abandoned immediately the intoxicating bowl, but laid hold on the hope set before him in the gospel. He is now gaining the reputation he once lost, and appears like one raised from the dead.

“In August, the gentlemen engaged in distributing Tracts among the soldiers on Governor’s Island, reported that since the commencement of their labors seven of the soldiers had established a prayer meeting, which was regularly attended twice a week, and there was evidently a change for the better among the soldiers generally. Profaneness, particularly, was less common than it had been formerly. Within a few weeks one of the distributors reports that several individuals upon that island profess to have been converted to God.”\*

‘I could tell you facts upon facts, that would hold you all attentive by their interest, if they affect your mind as they do mine, till midnight; and even then, I should but have embarked on an ocean of facts, relative to the utility of these

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\* See Am. Tr. Mag. March, 1830.

little pamphlets, which I suppose I should find without a bottom, or without a shore.

‘I’ll tell you what, children,’ said uncle Merton, drawing them closer and closer to him, ‘you, young as you are, have yet a mighty effort to make in this cause. If you live to be as old as your uncle, and I am old enough now to be grey—’

*Henry.* ‘Why, uncle, I never knew you were grey.’

*Charles,* (looking very sharp.) ‘I’m sure, uncle, I do not think you are *very* grey; only a few white hairs—’

*Uncle.* ‘Yes; but they are thickening fast, and work as I may, I cannot work long. I have lived almost three times as long as you, William, and if I had begun to serve Christ, and labor in every possible way to advance his cause from the time I was as old as the youngest of you, till this day, how much I might have done! Learn to love the Saviour now, enlist in the good cause—and when you have enlisted, work like valiant soldiers; work steadily, perseveringly, and weary not—there will be a long and glorious rest for you in heaven. I say, only give yourselves to Christ; then labor for him,

and your influence may be felt throughout the world. I might look back in time, or if not, in eternity, and see the influence of you, three boys, spreading and spreading as that of the American Tract Society has done. Why, I can remember, when fifteen years ago, that Society was like a grain of mustard-seed ; and look at it now !—it is grafted in a tree, whose boughs are thickening, whose shadow is increasing, and soon will the people of many lands cluster beneath its branches.

‘ Your influence may spread like that, but you must have holy hearts and praying souls first. You may dig around this tree, water and prune it, and invite many a weary soul to recline beneath its shade, to eat of its fruit and live ; and then have a whole eternity to rest from your labors, and rejoice in their results.’

Uncle Merton stopped ; he felt deeply for the souls of the young immortals around him—he closed his eyes a moment, and I doubt not a silent petition, raised at that time for their salvation and future usefulness, will be found on the records of the last day.

All were silent some minutes. William’s

black eyes sparkled with unutterable feeling, and every glance was full of soul.

He rose, and opening Emily's work-table, drew from it a beautifully gilded box. On the front of it, in large gilt letters, were the words "For the American Tract Society." On the top was a narrow opening; above was inscribed in small, delicate letters, "Give, and it shall be given unto you." Luke vi. 38. And below, "God loveth a cheerful giver." 2 Cor. ix. 7.

It was passed to his mother first, and in silence. The box itself told its errand, and the lid, silent though eloquent, pierced to the deepest recesses of her benevolent heart. A bill, in small folds, fell noiseless through the lid, the first treasure there. Helen, Emily and Susan were in turn presented with an opportunity to show their love to the Tract cause, and the box next silently appealed to uncle Merton. He also put in a bill, carefully folded; none knew of what amount—but Charles has ever since constantly affirmed, that he saw the corner sticking out, and \$10 on it. Charles and Henry gave in their little stock with many winks and smiles. There was but one left to add a mite, and that



was little Ann. She had been asleep in Emily's lap all the evening till within half an hour, and when William first drew forth his charity-box, Emily placed her finger on her lips in token of silence, and put a silver bit in her hand—and there she sat, holding up her bright four-pence, waiting for her turn to come, and when the box was passed to her, she dropped her shining treasure in, with a jingle and a hearty laugh, that turned all eyes upon her.

The box was then set away, not to be opened till the time of probation for life-membership closed.

'I am glad,' said uncle Merton, as the box retired, '*heartily* glad, William, to see you make so good a beginning.'

'Uncle,' said Susan, 'mother has told me to-day, how *I* can do something.'

*Uncle.* 'How?'

*Susan.* 'By forming a Juvenile Tract Society for the West. Emily has drawn up my subscription paper, and I am going out for subscribers to-morrow.'

'Good!' said uncle Merton, 'and if you are earnest and persevering, I will use my influence to have it but the first-fruits of juvenile efforts for the West.'

‘ Make a beginning, Susan,’ said he, as he rose to take his leave ; ‘ who knows but your effort may put in motion hundreds of little fingers, and wake up as many young hearts to wish well to that part of Zion, and to build up her waste places. There is more than enough for us *all* to do. Emily, you must not slacken your efforts, but increase more and more in your labors of love, and induce our Helen to lend her aid to Christ.

‘ Remember, boys, I expect *much* from you all in holy effort. Who will replenish the Tract Society’s funds, and direct her operations thirty years hence, but such as are now boys like you ; and perhaps *much*, very much of its future influence and prosperity, may depend even on *you*.’

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CHRISTIAN BIRTH AND EDUCATION.

Great God, to thee my voice I raise,  
To thee my youngest years belong,  
I would begin my life with praise,  
Till growing years improve the song.

'Tis to thy sovereign grace I owe,  
That I was born on Christian ground,  
Where streams of heavenly mercy flow,  
And words of sweet salvation sound.

How glad the heathen would have been,  
That worship idols, stocks, and stone,  
If they the book of God had seen,  
Or Jesus and his gospel known.

How do I pity those that dwell,  
Where ignorance and darkness reigns ;  
They know no heaven, they fear no hell,  
Those endless joys, those endless pains.

Thy glorious promises, O Lord,  
Kindle my hopes and my desire ;  
While all the preachers of thy word  
Warn me to 'scape eternal fire.

Thy praise shall still employ my breath,  
Since thou hast mark'd my way to heaven ;  
Nor will I run the road to death,  
And waste the blessings thou hast given.

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CHILDREN DEDICATING THEMSELVES TO GOD.

To thee, Almighty God, to thee  
Our childhood we resign ;  
'Twill please us to look back and see  
That our whole lives were thine.



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